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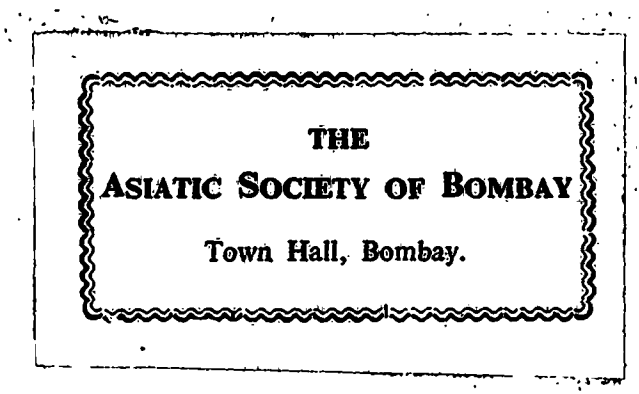

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SERMONS
AND
DISCOURSES
ON SEVERAL
SUBJECTS
AND
OCCASIONS.

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BY

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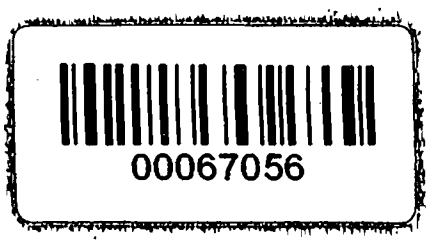
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THE

CONTENTS

OF THE

Fourth VOLUME.

SERMON I.

On the Martyrdom of King *Charles* I.

LUKE xxiii. 28.

Daughters of Jeruſalem, *weep not for me, but weep for yourſelves and for your Children.* 1

A Day of Trouble, Rebuke, and Blaſphemy, that derived Infamy, Miſery, and Guilt upon this Nation. pag. 1, 2

The Text taken from one of the Leſſons, which, according to the Courſe of the Liturgy, was read to the King juſt before his Martyrdom, and is now appointed to be read on the Day of its Commemoration. p 2.

The laſt Moments of his Life, in Imitation of our Bleſſed Saviour's, were employed in awakening a drowſy Nation to a Senſe of its Guilt, and a Dread of its impending Puniſhment. 4

I. The Doctrines this Day ſuggeſts to us, are, That we miſplace our Grief if we employ it in bewailing and lamenting our martyred Sovereign. 5, 6

The Day on which the ancient Martyrs were *crowned*, ſolemnized with Joy like their Birth-days. 6

In like manner we ought to magnify the Grace of God, which inſpired our Sovereign with ſuch Virtues, as made him ſhine with greater Luſtre in the Depth of his Sufferings, than he did in his moſt flouriſhing Circumſtances. 7, 8

And raiſed him in his loweſt State as far above the moſt proſperous Princes, as they themſelves ſeem raiſed above the reſt of Mankind. 8—11

By which he has given an Inſtance to profane Men, of the Power of thoſe religious Principles, which could ſupport him

him under all the Indignities that befel him. 12
And Reflects an Honour on that Church, at whoſe Breaſt he ſucked thoſe Principles. 12, 13
Every Conſideration that heightens his Virtue, enhances the Guilt of the Inſtruments of his Ruin. 13, 14
II. Nations, as Nations, are liable to Guilt, and conſequently to Puniſhment. 14
The Reaſon why this appears clearer from the Old Teſtament than the New. 15, 16
How this Nation is concerned in the Guilt of the Martyrdom. 16, 17
The inflaming Circumſtances of its Guilt. 18, 19
Which was puniſhed, in ſome Meaſure, by its own neceſſary Conſequences. 20—24
Theſe not put to an end at the Reſtoration 25
Nor ever can be, while the Doctrines that paved the Way to this Wickedneſs are embraced and cheriſhed. 28—31
A Deprecation of God's Judgments. 32, 33

SERMON II.

The wicked Lives of *Chriſtians* no Argument againſt the Truth of *Chriſtianity*.

1 TIM. vi. 1.

That the Name of God and his Doctrine be not blaſphemed. 35

Though the Purity of the Chriſtian Morality is a Proof of its divine Original, yet the wicked Lives of *Chriſtians* are urged as an Objection againſt it. 35—37

I. An Enquiry into the Grounds of this Objection: Where it may be obſerved,

That as bad Men are under the Chriſtian Diſpenſation, they would have been worſe without it. 38

The Vices we obſerve among *Chriſtians* ſtrike the Imagination more ſtrongly, by reaſon of their Nearneſs. 39

And becauſe they are attended with a deeper Guilt. 40

The

The Virtues of a good *Chriſtian* leſs known, becauſe practiſed with a View only to another World. 40
The Author of *The Whole Duty of Man* a remarkable Inſtance of this. 41
II. Allowing the Complaint to be juſt, there would be no Reaſon to urge it to the Diſadvantage of Chriſtianity itſelf. 42
1. The holieſt and pureſt Doctrine is but Doctrine ſtill, and can only inſtruct and admoniſh, not compel. 43
It is no more an Argument againſt Revealed than againſt Natural Religion. 44, 45
2. Chriſtianity in its Infancy had all the Influence upon the Lives of its Profeſſors that could be expected; and if it has not the ſame now, this muſt not be imputed to its Doctrine, but to other Reaſons. 46, 47
As 1ſt Becauſe it is not embraced ſo much upon Principle, as formerly. 48
2dly Becauſe different Schemes of Religion have been invented, very different from the Purport of the Goſpel. 49

3dly *Chriſtians* that reject the Means of becoming good Men, muſt be *naturally* worſe for them, as well as *judicially* ſo. 54.

4thly It is hard to make Chriſtianity anſwerable for the ill Lives of thoſe, who do not in good earneſt receive it; and harder ſtill, that thoſe very Men, whoſe Lives give Occaſion for this Objection, ſhould preſs it moſt eagerly. 55

III. The Inferences from this Diſcourſe are,

1. The Degeneracy of *Chriſtians* is no Argument againſt the Truth of Chriſtianity, but rather a Confirmation of it, becauſe ſuch a Degeneracy was actually foretold by *Chriſt* and his Apoſtles. 56, 57

And becauſe the Deſign of Chriſtianity, which was to reform the World, being ſo remarkably defeated, it muſt have come to nought long ago, if it had not been from God. 58

2. From our preſent Degeneracy we may conclude we were once in a better State. 58, 59

3. We

3. We learn from hence not to measure Persons by Doctrines, or Doctrines by Persons. 60, 61
4. The best Way to remove this Scandal taken against Christianity, is to conform our Lives to the Doctrines of it. 61—63

SERMON III.

The Fear of God a Motive to Holiness.

PHIL. ii. 12.

Work out your own Salvation with Fear and Trembling. 65

The Author of our Nature has been pleased to address himself to our Passions, as well as our Reason. 65, 66
I. Some *general* Reflexions that may serve to lessen the ill Opinion scrupulous Persons entertain of their Repentance, from its being founded upon a Principle of Fear. 67
1. The Gospel presses the Necessity of Repentance in general; but is silent as to the Motive from whence it must arise. 68
2. Those that think their Repentance ill grounded, because it was owing to a Principle

Principle of Fear; might as well think their Scruples ill grounded, that are owing to the very ſame Principle. 69, 70

3. It is no ſlight Token of a Man's being really good, becauſe he ſuſpects himſelf not to be ſo. 70—72

II. The Fear of God's Wrath *particularly* proved to be a proper Motive to Obedience. 73

1. Becauſe Fear is a Paſſion implanted by God in our Nature, and it never anſwers its End ſo well, as when it has this Effect upon us. 73—75

2. Becauſe God cannot be conſidered as a Law-giver, without enforcing his Laws by a Sanction. 75, 76

The *Hope* of a Reward as much a *ſelfiſh* Principle, as the *Fear* of loſing one. 76, 77

3. The State of a profligate Sinner is ſuch, that nothing but Terror can lay hold of him. 77—79

If this Principle has done the Work of a better, it has had its proper Effect. 82—84

Melan-

Melancholy Perſons perſuade themſelves into an Opinion that they *love* God leſs, and *dread* him more, than they really do. 84, 85

The right Uſe of theſe Apprehenſions is to take Occaſion from them to advance faſter in the Ways of Religion. 85, 86

SERMON IV.

The Terrors of Conſcience.

MATT. xiv. 1, 2, 3.

At that Time Herod *the Tetrarch heard of the Fame of* Jeſus, *and ſaid unto his Servants, This is* John *the Baptiſt, he is riſen from the Dead, and therefore mighty Works do ſhew forth themſelves in him. For* Herod *had laid hold on* John, *and bound him, and put him in Priſon for* Herodias *ſake, his Brother* Philip's *Wife.* 87

The State of the Wicked a very reſtleſs one. 87, 88

The Wildneſs and Inconſiſtency of *Herod's* Imagination. 89, 90

I. The Reproaches of Conſcience unavoidable, proved from Scripture. 93

From Reaſon. 96
And Experience. 99
A late Writer, who always dreaded being in the Dark, a remarkable Inſtance of this Truth. 104
Tiberius, another. 107
The Tales of Ghoſts and Spectres accounted for upon this Principle. 109
II. To account for the Difficulties that attend the Proof of this Propoſition, it is to be obſerved,
1. That our Judgments often miſlead us, when they are formed only upon the Outſide and Surface of Men's Actions. 112
2. That the Reprehenſions of Conſcience are not a continued, but intermitting Diſeaſe. 113
3. The few Inſtances of wicked Men that go out of the World without feeling the Stings of Conſcience, to be aſcribed either to ill Principles early and deeply imbibed, or to an Obſtinacy of Temper, or to a natural or acquired Stupidity. 116, 117

Theſe only prove, that there are Monſters in the *moral*, as well as the *natural* World; but make nothing againſt the ſettled Laws of either. 117, 118

III. The Application of this Doctrine, That even for *Pleaſure's* Sake we ought to abſtain from all criminal Pleaſures. 119

As it is a good Rule for a happy Conduct of Life, to manage our *Domeſtic* Concerns right, that we may be eaſy under our own Roof; ſo it is the beſt Way to ſecure *Peace* to ourſelves, by having it always in our Conſciences. 121

Let thoſe chiefly liſten to this Reprover, who are otherwiſe ſet in a great meaſure above Reproof. 122

SER-

SERMON V.

St. *Paul's* Defence before *Felix.*

ACTS xxiv. 25.

And as he reaſoned of Righteouſneſs, Temperance, and Judgment to come, Felix *trembled.* 125

The aſtoniſhing Scene of St. *Paul's* Preaching. *Ibid.*

I. The ſubject Matter of it remarkable for its Excellence and Importance. 127—130

And for its Fitneſs and Propriety with Regard to the Perſon, to whom it was addreſſed. 130, 131

The Dexterity and Addreſs of the Apoſtle to be admired in the Conduct of it. 131, 132

His ſincere and diſintereſted Spirit. 132, 133

And his undaunted and exemplary Courage. 133, 134

II. The Manner of St. *Paul's* handling his Subject, *he reaſoned.* 136

A wrong

A wrong Notion frequently entertained concerning edifying Diſcourſes. 137, 138

III. The wonderful Effect of St. *Paul's* Reaſoning, *Felix trembled.* 139

The great Force and Efficacy of the Word of God when duly handled, ſhewn from this and other Inſtances in Scripture. 140—143

A Reproach to our Sluggiſhneſs and Inſenſibility. 143

Why St. *Paul's* Preaching had not the ſame good Effect on *Druſilla*, the Partner with *Felix* in his Crimes. 143, 144

And why the good Effect on *Felix* was not more laſting. 145, 146

An Exhortation, that the Word of God may have a better Effect on us. 146—148

SER-

SERMON VI.

Of Glorying in the Croſs of CHRIST.

GAL. vi. 14.

But God forbid that I ſhould glory, ſave in the Croſs of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, *whereby the World is crucified unto me, and I unto the World.* 149

The Occaſion of the Words of the Text opened. 150—155

I. Whatever Excellencies, outward Advantages, or Privileges it may be our Lot to enjoy, it miſbecomes us, as we are *Chriſtians*, to glory in them. 156

This urged from the Uncertainty of Their Continuance, or of Our continuing with them. 157

From the Tendency of the Doctrines of the Chriſtian Religion. 158

And from the Contemplation of *Chriſt's* Triumph on the Croſs. 159—162

II. It

II. It highly becomes us to glory in the Croſs of *Chriſt*: 162
It is the Doctrine to which all the other Doctrines of the Goſpel refer, and from which they derive their Efficacy. 163
The Propriety of the Church of *England's* uſing the Sign of the Croſs in Baptiſm. 164, 165
III. The proper Methods of glorying in the Croſs of *Chriſt*; 165
1. By frequently meditating on his Sufferings: 166
2. By imitating thoſe meek Graces and Virtues that he diſplayed under them: 167
3. By celebrating the Memorial of his Death. 170—174

SERMON VII.

External Worſhip a fit and reaſonable Duty.

PSAL. xcv. 6.

O come let us worſhip, and bow down, let us kneel before the Lord our Maker. 175

The Propriety of placing the Hymn, from whence the Text is taken, at the Entrance of our Morning Devotions. *ibid.*

I. External Adoration ſhewn to be a reaſonable Duty, as it relates to *God*, and is Part of that *natural Homage*, which the *whole* Man, Soul and Body, owes to him, on Account of his Creation and Preſervation of us. 179

As we have no way of forming an Idea of God, but by conſidering the ſeveral limited Perfections, ſcattered among his Creatures; ſo we have no Way of applying to him as Dependents, but by

by conſidering thoſe Marks of Reſpect that are uſed among Men. 180, 181
External Worſhip mentioned as a natural Duty, in both Teſtaments. 183, 184
It is juſt we ſhould glorify God in this Life with the Body as well as the Soul, if we expect he ſhould glorify both in another. 185
If outward Worſhip is not due to God under the Goſpel, the paying it to Idols cannot be highly culpable. 185, 186
II. External Worſhip a reaſonable Duty, as it relates to *ourſelves*, and is a Help towards promoting the ſpiritual Worſhip of our Souls. 186
The Emotions of the Soul are naturally communicated to the Body. 186, 187
The Body by its devout Geſtures returns the Force the Soul lent it: 187—189
And by this Means makes amends, as it were, for the Obſtructions it gives in the Performance of many other Duties. 189, 190

III. External Adoration a reaſonable Duty, as it relates to our *Neighbour*, and is a Sign, by which we expreſs to others the religious Veneration that dwells in us. 190

The Advantages of public Worſhip to excite the mutual Ardour of the Faithful. 190, 191

And to ſilence the Scoffs of the Unbeliever. 191, 192

An Exhortation to the Practice of this Duty, from the Inconvenience of the Neglect of it, 194

And the Example of the Primitive *Chriſtians*. 194, 195

SER-

SERMON VIII.

External Worſhip ſhewn to be of no Efficacy, unleſs accompanied with Internal Devotion: Together with the excellent Contrivance of the Church of *England* Service to promote the latter.

LAM. iii. 41.

Let us lift up our Hearts, with our Hands, unto God in the Heavens. 197

The Occaſion of the Text opened. 197, 198

The Folly of a mere external Worſhip without a ſuitable Affection of the Heart ſhewn from the Conſideration,

1. Of the Divine Nature: 200
2. Of our own: 202
3. Of the great End and Deſign of Prayer: 203

4. Of the Bleſſings, which, when duly performed, it is certainly attended with. 204

The great Advantages of the public Offices of the Church of *England* to raiſe the Attention of all ſincere Worſhipers:

1. By their being drawn up in our Mother Tongue: 207
2. In their conſiſting of a premeditated Form of Words: 208
3. In their being divided into frequent Breaks and Pauſes: 211
4. In their Variety: 212
5. In the Solemnity of them, neither ſo plain as not to be able to rouſe, nor ſo gaudy as to diſtract the Mind. 213, &c.

SER-

SERMON IX.

The Uſefulneſs of Church Muſic; on Saint *Cecilia's* Day, 1690.

PSAL. lvii. 7, 8.

My Heart is fixed, O God, my Heart is fixed; I will ſing and give Praiſe. Awake up, my Glory! Awake, Pſaltery and Harp! I myſelf will awake right early. 217

David a Man after God's Heart, by qualifying his own Heart for the Duties of the Sanctuary. 217, 218

The Purport of the Text. 218, 219

I. A lively Attention of Mind the great Recommendation of our public Devotions to God. 221

The Difference between the *Jewiſh* Diſpenſation in this particular, and the *Chriſtian*. 222, 223

II. All pious Helps to raiſe our Attention, proper to be uſed in our public Worſhip. 225

Vocal and Inſtrumental Harmony uſeful to this purpoſe;

1. As it removes the ordinary Hindrances of our Devotion, *viz.*

The *Engagement* of Thought, which we often bring with us into Church, from what we laſt converſed with: 226

And thoſe accidental *Diſtractions* that happen to us during the Courſe of the Service: 227

And laſtly, that *Wearineſs* and Flatneſs of Mind, which ſome weak Tempers may labour under, by reaſon of the Length of it. 228

2. It not only removes Impediments to our Devotion, but ſupplies us with Advantages towards performing it;

By adding Solemnity to the public Service; 229

And by raiſing in the Soul all the devout Paſſions, that of Love particularly, which wing it up to Heaven, and fit it for the Illapſes of the Holy Spirit. 231—235

St. *John*, in whoſe Breaſt divine Love ſeems to have abounded moſt, has ſpoken

ſpoken the moſt advantageouſly of Vocal and Inſtrumental Muſic. 233
Ignatius inculcates the ſame Leſſon after him, who probably learnt it perſonally from him. 233, 234
It makes our Duty a Pleaſure, and enables us, by that means, to perform it with Vigour and Chearfulneſs. 235
This Effect remarkably viſible in *David*, 236
And ſeveral of the Chriſtian Fathers. 237
The Inconveniences that have ariſen from Church Muſic much over-balanced by the Advantages of it. 241
III. The Way of performing Divine Service in the *Church of England*, better fitted to raiſe our *Affections*, than any other Form of Devotion now practiſed in the Chriſtian World. 241, 242
IV. An Exhortation to make our Devotion exemplary in proportion to thoſe Advantages, which we above all others enjoy. 242—245

SER-

SERMON X.

Of Anxiety and Solicitude.

MATT. vi. 34.

Take no Thought for the Morrow. 247

The Precepts of our Saviour's Sermon on the Mount very different from the prevailing Opinions of the *Jews* at that Time. 247, 248

The Duty of the Text explained, with its proper Limitations. 249—253

I. The *Evil* of too great Anxiety ſhewn,

1. As it is oppoſite to ſeveral plain Precepts of Scripture; 254

2. As it is an Invaſion of the peculiar Province and Prerogative of God; 254, 255

3. As it is built always on a ſecret Diſtruſt of God's Goodneſs towards us, and perpetual Watchfulneſs over us: 256

Which yet very evidently appears to us from the Light of Nature; 257, 258

And

And from the Obſervation of his Providence over the ſeveral Ranks of lower and leſs noble Creatures. 258—260

II. The *Folly* of too great Anxiety.

1. It makes us feel Afflictions which will never overtake us, and multiplies thoſe which certainly will: 261—264

2. It takes away from us the Power either to *eſcape* or *bear* them. 265, 266

3. An anxious Concern for *Futurity* robs us of all the Eaſe and Advantages which might ariſe from a proper and diſcreet Uſe of the *preſent* Moment. 266

4. The *Preſence* of Evils often ſuggeſts better Expedients and wiſer Counſels, than all our Wiſdom and Foreſight can do. 267

5. By our tormenting Cares we forfeit our Intereſt in the divine Providence and Protection. 268, 269

An Exhortation to truſt in God. 270—273

SER-

SERMON XI.

The Wretchedneſs of living in a wavering State of Mind.

GEN. xlix. 4.

Unſtable as Water, thou ſhalt not excel. 275

The Occaſion of the Words. 275, 276

1. The ill Condition of that Man, who is diſtracted between two Courſes of Life, a *good* and *bad* one. 277

1. He is in the meaneſt State of Mind, human Nature is capable of, inaſmuch as he forfeits the Prerogative of his Underſtanding, which was deſigned for a Guide to him: 278

And diſgraces the Image of God, whoſe glorious Attribute is *Immutability*: 279, 280

And laſtly, makes himſelf lower than the Beaſts, who act regularly under the Guidance of Inſtinct. 281

2. He is in a State of perpetual *Trouble* and *Diſturbance* to himſelf; his good Fits being like ſhort Intervals of

of Madneſs, which ſerve only to let the Madman into a Knowledge of his Diſeaſe. 281—285

3. This Temper is miſchievous to a *Man* in point of *Intereſt*, as well as *Eaſe*; not only by rendering him actually unfit for the Buſineſs of Life, but ſuſpected likewiſe of Hypocriſy and Diſſimulation. 285—287

4. It is utterly inconſiſtent with the Terms of *Salvation*. 287—290

II. To perſuade the Man that is thus bewildered to fix a ſure Principle of *Virtue* in his Mind, that may guide and govern him *throughout*, and make him *uniformly* wiſe,

1. Let him be ſure that his *Belief* is right, and ſound at Bottom: 291—293

2. Let him conſider well what that *particular Weight* was, that in the Days of his *Irreſolution* ſtill hung upon him, and clogged his virtuous Endeavours: 293, 294

3. Let him take care not to come within the Reach of any thing, that may

unfaſten his Reſolutions, whilſt they are yet young and tender. 294, 295

4. To theſe *Endeavours* let him add fervent *Prayer*, that he may be *ſtabliſhed, ſtrengthened, ſettled.* 295, 296

SERMON XII.

The Duty of living peaceably explained and recommended, in a Farewel Sermon at Sain: *Bride's.*

ROM. xii. 18

If it be poſſible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all Men, 297

The Importance of the Duty in the Text, and the Seaſonableneſs of preſſing it upon the preſent Occaſion. 297, 298

I. Wherein it conſiſts, in relation to *Public* and *Private* Men, *Opinions* and *Practice.* 299—303

II. The *Extent* of it, *with all Men.* 303—305

III. The

III. The Difficulty of practiſing it, intimated by theſe Words, *if it be poſſible*, and *as much as lieth in you*. 305

We are allowed to ſtand up in Defence of our *Fortune or good Name*, where *violent* Encroachments are made upon them; 306

And in Defence of the Honour of God, and the Intereſts of Virtue. 306, 307

But ſtill, as War has its Rules and Reſtraints, within which its Cruelties are bounded; much more in theſe Caſes ought we to have an Eye to Peace, while we ſeem to overlook it. 307, 308

IV. The beſt Helps to the Practice of this Duty are,

1. To regulate our Paſſions: 309, 310
2. To moderate our Deſires, and ſhorten our Deſigns, with regard to the good Things of Life: 310, 311
3. To have a watchful Eye upon ourſelves in our firſt *Entrance* upon any Conteſt: 311, 312
4. Always to guard againſt the Intemperance of our *Tongue*, eſpecially

cially in relation to that natural Proneneſs it has towards publiſhing the Faults of others: 312, 313

5. To keep ourſelves from embarking in Parties and Factions: 313

6. To ſtudy to be quiet, by *doing our own Buſineſs* in our proper Profeſſion or Calling. 313, 314.

7. Add Prayer to the Author of *Peace and Lover of Concord*, for the Fruits of his Spirit, which are *Love, Joy, Peace*, &c. 314.

An Exhortation to the Practice of this Doctrine on the preſent Occaſion, viz. the Choice of a Lecturer. 315—324

SER-

A SERMON ON THE MARTYRDOM OF King CHARLES I.

LUKE xxiii. 28.

Daughters of Jeruſalem, *weep not for me, but weep for yourſelves, and for your Children.*

THIS is a *Day of Trouble, of Rebuke, and Blaſphemy*; diſtinguiſhed in the Annals of our Nation, and the Kalendar of our Church, by the ſad Suffering of an excellent Prince, who fell a SERM. I.

SERM. I. Sacrifice to the Rage of his Rebellious Subjects; and, by his Fall, derived Infamy, Miſery, and Guilt on them, and their ſinful Poſterity.

We are met here, to acknowledge our Sin, to expreſs our public Detestation of it, and to deprecate the Vengeance, which hath purſued, and doth ſtill, I fear, purſue us on the Account of it. In order to raiſe and improve theſe good Thoughts and Diſpoſitions, I have pitched on the Words ſpoken by our Bleſſed Saviour in his ſad Proceſſion towards Calvary, as the Ground of our preſent Meditations,—*Daughters of* Jeruſalem, &c.

Since Providence ſo ordered it, that one of the Leſſons for that Day, whereon the Royal Martyr ſuffered, and which was read to him juſt before his aſcending the Scaffold, ſhould contain an Account of the Paſſion of our Lord; and the ſame Leſſon is ſtill, by Authority, appointed to be read in theſe annual Aſſemblies; I may be allowed, I hope, from the Hiſtory of that Paſſion, written by St. *Luke*, to take the Words you have heard,

heard, and apply them to the Subject I am now about to handle, without incurring the Imputation of drawing unſeemly Parallels, and without giving Offence to any, but thoſe, who are Offended with the *Anniverſary* itſelf, and with our ſolemn and devout *Manner* of obſerving it. SERM. I.

As *Jeſus* went to his Crucifixion, St. *Luke* tells us, that *there followed him, a great Company of People, and of Women, which alſo bewailed and lamented him. But Jeſus turning unto them, ſaid, Daughters of Jeruſalem, weep not for me, but weep for yourſelves, and for your Children: For, behold the Days are coming, in the which they ſhall ſay, Bleſſed are the Barren, and the Wombs that never bare, and the Paps that never gave ſuck!* His preſent Sufferings, and approaching Death, withheld him not from reflecting with Concern on the Calamities, which were ready to overtake others on his Account. And, becauſe the Women who followed him to *Calvary*, out of a Tenderneſs of

SERM. I. Nature peculiar to their Sex, indulged themſelves in the loudeſt Expreſſions of Grief; therefore to *theſe* he particularly addreſſes the Admonition of the Text; directs them to turn their well-meant Compaſſion from *him* upon *themſelves*; to reſerve all their Tears for a time, now at hand, when the whole Nation of the *Jews* would be called to a ſtrict Account for ſpilling his Blood, and be made an aſtoniſhing Inſtance of Divine Vengeance.

The good Prince, whoſe unhappy Fate we commemorate, did in *this*, as well as *other* reſpects, follow the Heb. i. 10. Steps of *the great Captain of his Salvation, who was made perfect through Sufferings:* For the laſt Moments of his Life, which his Murderers allowed him, were employed in awakening a drowſy Nation into a Senſe of its Guilt, and a Dread of its impending Puniſhment. Secure of his own Innocence and Happineſs, he ſeemed to have conquered all Concern for himſelf; and, like a true Father of his People,

People, was chiefly ſolicitous for the Peace and Welfare of his People. His dying Words breathed nothing but Pity and Tenderneſs towards his Subjects who were to ſurvive his Fall, and to feel the ſad Effects of it. And therefore to *thoſe*, who with weeping Eyes then beheld that bloody Scene, and to *us*, who with like Grief now look on at a diſtance, may we ſuppoſe the Royal Sufferer (conſiſtently with the Character he then maintained) to ſay,— *Weep not for me; but weep for yourſelves, and for your Children.* SERM. I.

This I am ſure, is an Inſtruction, which the Day itſelf ſeems naturally to afford us, and which *I* ſhall, therefore, purſue in both its Branches; ſhewing you,

Firſt, That we miſplace our Grief, if we employ it in bewailing and lamenting our Martyred Sovereign; And, I.

SERM. I. *Secondly*, That the true End of theſe annual Humiliations is, *to weep for ourſelves, and for our Children*; to deplore the Guilt which our Fore-fathers contracted by this inhuman Deed, and which, we have reaſon to fear, is not even yet fully expiated.

I. *Firſt*, In the early Ages of the Church, the Cuſtom was annually to obſerve thoſe Days, on which the *Martyrs* were *crowned* (ſuch was the Language of that Time) not with dejected Looks, or any outward Expreſſions of Sorrow; but with the Solemnities uſual on *Birth-days* (and ſuch alſo they were ſtyled) even with all poſſible Inſtances of devout Exultation and Joy. Upon theſe Occaſions, pious *Chriſtians* flocked to the Places, where thoſe faithful Servants of *Chriſt* ſlept, or had ſealed the Truth of their Teſtimony with their Blood: *There* they held their ſacred Aſſemblies (as they afterwards built their Churches.) *There*

There they made their *Euchariſtic* Ob- SERM.
lations, and celebrated their Feaſts of I.
Love; gave Thanks to God for the
exemplary Virtues and Graces, which
adorned the Lives and Deaths of thoſe
holy Perſons, and excited themſelves
into like degrees of *Chriſtian* Zeal and
Fervor.

Their Behaviour in theſe Caſes ſhould be the Rule of *Ours*, and teach us to obſerve this Anniverſary in ſuch a manner, as may render it moſt honourable to the Dead, and moſt uſeful to the Living. To that end, it will become us, not vainly to indulge our Grief, or our Reſentments, in behalf of our much injured Prince; not fruitleſly to ſpend our time in lamenting his Misfortunes; but rather to employ it in magnifying the Grace of God, which enabled him ſo conſtantly to endure them, and ſo heartily to forgive the Authors of them; which armed him with ſuch a wondrous Degree of Meekneſs and Patience; inſpired him with ſuch *Chriſtian* Magnanimity

SERM. I. and Courage, as made him ſhine with a greater Luſtre in the Depth of his Sufferings, than he did in his moſt flouriſhing Circumſtances; and put off his Crown after a more glorious Manner, than he firſt wore it on the Day of his Coronation.

Indeed, the Mind of Man, filled with vain Ideas of wordly Pomp and Greatneſs, is apt to admire thoſe Princes moſt, who are moſt fortunate, and have filled the World with the Fame of their ſucceſsful Atchievements. But to thoſe, who weigh Things in the Balance of right Reaſon, and true Religon, it will, I am perſuaded, appear that the Character of this excellent King, even while he was in his loweſt and moſt afflicted State, had ſomething in it, more truly Great and Noble, than all the Triumphs of Conquerors; ſomething, that raiſed him as far above the moſt proſperous Princes, as they themſelves ſeem raiſed above the reſt of Mankind.

Many Kings there have been, as happy as all worldly Felicity could make them;

them; and ſome of theſe have diſtinguiſhed themſelves as much by their Virtues, as their Happineſs. But the Poſſeſſors of thoſe Virtues, being ſeated on a *Throne*, diſplayed them from thence with all manner of Advantage; their good Actions appeared in the beſt Light, by reaſon of the high Orb, in which they moved, while performing them; whereas, the Royal Virtues, which we this Day celebrate, ſhone brighteſt in *Affliction*, and when all external Marks of Royal State and Dignity were wanting to recommend them. Others, perhaps, may have been as juſt, as beneficent, as merciful in the Exerciſe of their Royal Power, as this good King was; but none ſurely did ever maintain ſuch a majeſtic Evenneſs and Serenity of Mind, when deſpoiled of that Power, when ſtripped of every thing but a good Cauſe, and a good Conſcience; when deſtitute of all Hopes of ſuccour from his Friends, or of Mercy from his Enemies: *Then*, even *then*, did he poſſeſs SERM. I.

SERM. I. poſſeſs his Soul in Peace, and patiently expect the Event, without the leaſt outward Sign of Dejection or Diſcompoſure. He remembered himſelf to be a King, when all the World beſide ſeemed to have forgotten it; when his inferiors treated him with inſolence, and his Equals with Indifference; when he was brought before that infamous Tribunal, where his own Subjects ſat as his Judges; and even when he came to die by their Sentence.—In *all* theſe ſad Circumſtances, on *all* theſe trying Occaſions, he ſpake, he did nothing, which miſbecame the high Character he bore, and will always bear, of a great King, and one of the beſt of *Chriſtians*. And this Mixture of unaffected Greatneſs and Goodneſs, in the Extremity of Miſery, was, I ſay, his peculiar and diſtinguiſhing Excellence. Other Royal Qualities, that adorn Proſperity, he ſhared in common with others of his Rank; but in the decent and kingly Exerciſe of theſe paſſive

paſſive Graces, he had, among the Liſt of Princes, no Superior, no Equal, no Rival. SERM. I.

Indeed, the laſt Scene of his Sufferings was very diſmal; and ſuch, from which mere Human Nature, unſupported by extraordinary Degrees of Grace, muſt needs have ſhrunk back a little affrighted, and ſeemed deſirous of declining. But thoſe Succours were not wanting to him; for he went even through this laſt Trial, unſhaken; and ſubmitted his Royal Head to the ſtroke of the Executioner, with as much Tranquillity and Meekneſs, as he had borne leſſer Barbarities. The Paſſage through this *Red Sea* was bloody, but ſhort; a Divine Hand ſtrengthened him in it, and conducted him through it; and he ſoon reached the Shore of Bliſs and Immortality.

He is now at Reſt in thoſe Manſions, where *Tears are wiped from all Eyes, where there is neither Death,*

nor

SERM. I. *nor Pain, nor Crying*, and from whence *Sorrow and Sighs do flee away.* Wherefore, *Let us not mourn, refuſing to be comforted*; but let us rather (as thoſe early *Chriſtians* did on the like Occaſions) *rejoice with exceeding Joy*: Rendering to God our Thanks, that he hath been pleaſed, in theſe laſt and moſt degenerate Times, to afford us ſuch an illuſtrious Pattern of Virtue and Goodneſs, as even the pureſt Ages of *Chriſtianity* would have looked up to with Reverence; that, by this Means, he hath given to looſe and prophane Men an Inſtance of the great Power of thoſe Religious Principles, which *did*, and which only *could* ſupport the Mind of this pious Prince under all the Indignities and Miſeries that befel him.

What an Honour is it to that Church, at whoſe Breaſt he firſt ſucked theſe Principles, to have been inſtrumental in ſowing the firſt Seeds, from whence ſuch excellent Fruits afterwards

wards ſprang! How ought ſhe to boaſt and triumph in this Thought, That a Prince, who excelled as much in the Knowledge, as in the Practice of Religion, ſhould be ſo firm and unmoveable an Aſſertor of her Doctrine, and Diſcipline, and Worſhip! which he *therefore* valued highly, becauſe he underſtood them thoroughly: That he ſhould go on to maintain *Her* Cauſe, even long after he deſpaired of maintaining his *Own*, or of being able to retrieve his loſt Crown and Dignity! and that, after he had thus defended her *Faith*, during his *Life*, he ſhould recommend it ſtill more at his *Death* by dying *in* it, and *for* it! SERM. I.

But the more Excellent the Character of this Prince was, the more barbarous and brutal was the Rage by which he fell. Every Conſideration, which heightens his matchleſs Virtues, and endears his Memory to us, ſerves alſo to enhance the Wickedneſs of thoſe Sons of *Belial*, who were the Inſtru-

SERM. I. Inſtruments of his Ruin, and embrued their Hands in his Blood. And therefore though we have no occaſion to *weep for him*, yet have we great Reaſon to *weep for ourſelves and for our Children*; for the Guilt which the Nation contracted, and the Infamy it underwent, by reaſon of that inhuman Deed, and for the other fatal Conſequences, which *then did*, and which (as we have juſt Reaſon to fear) *may ſtill* attend it. And this is the *ſecond* Point, upon which I propoſed to enlarge:

II. *Secondly*, That Nations, *as* Nations are liable to Guilt, and conſequently to Puniſhment; and ſuch Puniſhments muſt be inflicted in this Life, in which alone thoſe Nations and Communities ſubſiſt, and cannot be extended to another World, where all Kingdoms and People are to be ſwallowed up in the Kingdom of the Lamb, and to become *one Fold under one Shepherd*; and

and that the Puniſhments inflicted by God on Nations in this Life, may be altogether, or in part, deferred by God for ſome time, 'till the Iniquity of thoſe Nations is full, and the Sinners grown ripe for Vengeance: Theſe are all Points ſufficiently evident from Reaſon and Scripture, and the Hiſtory of the World; they need no ſolemn Proof, becauſe they admit of no great Doubt. Little indeed is ſaid on this Head in the Books of the New Teſtament, which were all written for the Uſe of private ſcattered *Chriſtians*, ere as yet any one entire Nation was converted, or any of the great Rulers of the World had ſubmitted their Scepters to the Scepter of *Chriſt*: And, therefore, the Precepts there contained, relate chiefly, if not ſolely, to the Conduct of particular Perſons, and are ſilent as to the Methods of God's dealing with public Bodies and Societies of Men. And there was the leſs Occaſion for any Inſtructions of this kind in the New Teſtament, becauſe they had been given

SERM. I.

SERM. I. ſo frequently and fully in the Old; the Prophetic Parts of which do every where inculcate theſe Doctrines, as the Matters of Fact, recorded in the Hiſtorical Books, illuſtrate and confirm them. And from thence, therefore, all our Obſervations muſt be drawn, concerning the Influence which a People's Sins have upon their Sufferings, and concerning the Meaſures of that Political Juſtice, by which God governs the World. And in truth, it was proper that the Directions of this kind ſhould be given under the Inſtitution of *Moſes*; the *Letter* of which extended no further than to the Concerns of this Life: Whereas the Duties, the Promiſes, and Threatnings of the *Goſpel* do all look beyond the Grave, and are deſigned to regulate our Behaviour in *this* World, as it relates and leads to *another*.

The Doctrine then of God's Viſiting Nations, *as* ſuch, for Sins committed by them in that Capacity, being ſuppoſed; let us briefly apply it to the preſent

preſent Caſe, and ſee how far we ourſelves are concerned in it. SERM. I.

That the Sin of this Day was *National*, is not to be denied; the Nation itſelf confeſſed it, by appointing and obſerving theſe public and ſtated Humiliations. It was under the Colour of a *National Authority*, that the *Rebellion* was firſt raiſed, and all along carried on, and at laſt conſummated by the Erection of that infamous *High Court of Juſtice*, which gave the finiſhing Stroke to the ſucceſsful Villanies of that Time, by taking away the Life of our Sovereign. Indeed, the greateſt Part of the Nation abhorred that barbarous Act (and, had their Power been equal to their Inclination, would have prevented it) but many of them had contributed to it too much, and too long before; and, having joined in all the *Steps* that led to the Murder of the King, could not at laſt, by expreſſing their Deteſtation of the *Crime*, excuſe themſelves entirely from the *Guilt* of it.

SERM. I.

It was the *Nation* therefore, that *Sinned*; and ſinned with an high Hand, and with all the inflaming Circumſtances of Guilt and Aggravation. They made their way to the Completion of this Wickedneſs, through the moſt ſolemn *Engagements*, through all the Ties of Reaſon, and the Reluctances of *Conſcience*: The *Laws* of God and Man were but as *Withs* upon the Arms of *theſe Sampſons*, which they broke at pleaſure; and, when they had once overleaped the Mounds and Fences of Juſtice, were reſolved to think every Step lawful, which was neceſſary to juſtify thoſe they had already taken. Many Years they continued ſtedfaſtly purſuing theſe unrighteous Meaſures; *they held faſt Deceit, and refuſed to return*; and after heaping Tranſgreſſion upon Tranſgreſſion, did at laſt, through the Blood of many of their *Fellow-ſubjects*, arrive at that of their *Sovereign*, and in the calmeſt and moſt deliberate manner perpetrate the black Deſign they had for ſome time meditated.

Jer. viii. 5.

The

The *common* Methods, made uſe of by *rebellious Subjects* in the *Deſtruction of Princes*, did not pleaſe them; *Poiſon*, or a private *Aſſaſſination* was too *haſty* and *clandeſtine* a Way: They were reſolved to have the Proceeding more *Public*, and *Slow*, and *Solemn*; to carry it on by the *Forms of Law*, and with the *mock* Shew and Pageantry of *Juſtice* (a Way which crowned Heads had not hitherto been treated in) and ſince the *Crime* itſelf was *old*, and had been often repeated, to recommend it at leaſt by the *Newneſs of the Invention:* In which reſpect, it muſt be confeſſed, that they *outſtripped* all their *Rivals* in this Sort of Wickedneſs, even the bloodieſt of their *King-killing-Neighbours.* Indeed *new Inventions* for ſlaughtering Kings, and overturning States, are the *peculiar Reproach of this Nation*; of which we have *two* eminent Proofs upon Record, not to be paralleled in other Hiſtories, the *Gunpowder-Treaſon*, and *that of this Day*; *One* of them contrived by *Papiſts*, SERM. I.

SERM. I. the *Other* by wild *Sectaries* and *Enthuſiaſts*; *neither* of them (God be thanked) by the Members of *the Church of England!*

Jer. v. 8. And, *Shall I not viſit for ſuch Things, ſaith the Lord? Shall not my Soul be avenged of ſuch a Nation as this?* Shall a People ſin in this remarkable Manner; and ſhall not that Sin be as remarkably puniſhed? *It was* immediately, and, in ſome meaſure, puniſhed by the fatal and neceſſary Conſequences of it, by the ſad Diſorders and Confuſions that attended it. For, *had Zimri Peace who ſlew his Maſter?* Did the Partners in this black Crime quietly reap the expected Fruits of it? No! they did not, they were ſoon diſplaced from the high Seat of Authority, which they had uſurped; and gave way to other Uſurpers, and to various Forms of Government, which prevailed in their turns. The feveriſh Nation rolled from one Poſture, one Expedient to another, and found Reſt in none. It then ſoon appeared, how great the Loſs

2 Kings ix. 31.

was

was of their admirable Prince, and of their ancient Conſtitution, which periſhed with him. The People, who had miſcalled his mild and gentle Reign, Oppreſſion and Tyranny, found themſelves now *ruled with a Rod of Iron, and broken in Pieces like a Potter's Veſſel.* Pſ. ii. 9. They had *complained* of Arbitrary Power *without Cauſe*, and now *ſmarted* under it *without Remedy.* To ſecure their *Liberty* and *Laws*, they had made this *Charge*; which left both of them at the Mercy of *Standing Armies.* Thus *did their own Wickedneſs correct them, and their Backſlidings did reprove them!* Jer. ii. 12. They had pulled down a regular Primitive Church; and immediately Churches, Sects, and Religions, without Number, ſprang up in the room of it; inſtead of the honeſt Engliſh *Plainneſs* and *Simplicity*, a demure and ſly *Hypocriſy* prevailed; inſtead of ſober and well-weighed *Devotions*, all the Freaks and Rants of *Enthuſiaſm*. *Every* Way of worſhiping God, *but* the *true* One, was publicly

SERM. I. *allowed*; *all Men* were admitted to the Exercise of the *Sacred Function*, *but thoſe* who were moſt *lawfully called* to it, and beſt *qualified* for it. A Loud and Cauſeleſs *Complaint* of Impoſitions on the *Conſciences* of Men, in Things pertaining to God, had helped to ruin the *Church*; and now, every *little* Society pretending to that *venerable* Name, did the very thing they had complained of; impoſed the Platform of their Doctrine, Diſcipline, and Worſhip, as Divine; and were for rooting out all that oppoſed, or did not comply with it. In the mean time, they, who preſerved themſelves free from this ſort of Infection, were in as much Danger of ſwerving to a contrary Extreme, and of making Inferences to the Prejudice of Religion itſelf, which they ſaw perverted and proſtituted to the worſt Deſigns. Even *good* Men, at the ſight of theſe proſperous *Hypocrites*, were ready to cry out in the Words of complaining *Jeremiah*:—*Righteous art thou, O Lord, when I plead with thee*; yet

Jer. xii. 1, 2.

yet let me talk with thee of thy Judgments: *Wherefore doth the Way of the Wicked prosper? why are all they happy that deal very treacherously? Thou hast planted them; yea, they have taken root; they grow, they bring forth Fruit: Thou art near in their Mouth, and far* (very far) *from their Reins! Then*, when these hypocritical Pretenders to Godliness abounded, did an opposite Spirit of open Levity and Profaneness begin to gain Ground upon a Serious and Religious People: *Then* were those *Seeds* of Infidelity first sown among us, which have since sprung up, and increased into a mighty *Harvest.* Our endless *Divisions* were a Scandal to the truly Pious, the Boast of *Rome*, and the Sport of *Atheists:* We were *made a Reproach to our Neighbours, a Scorn and a Derision to them that were round about us; a Bye-word among the Heathen, a Shaking of the Head among the People: We lay down in our Shame, and our Confusion covered us.* No Words can express the various Sorts of Misery, under which this Nation then groan-

SERM. I.

Ps. xliv. 13, 14.

SERM. 1. ed, *by reaſon of the Multitude of Oppreſſions* and Oppreſſors. *New Lords had Dominion over us*; the very *Refuſe and Outcaſt of the People*; the Head became the Tail, and the Tail the Head; *the Child behaved himſelf proud againſt the Ancient, and the Baſe againſt the Honourable.* From Violence and Bloodſhed this new Model of Government had ariſen; and the ſame Methods were requiſite to cement and uphold it. Plunder and Rapine completed the Devaſtations which War had begun: Armed Forced decided Right, or executed the Sentence of thoſe, who had no manner of Right to decide it: They were altogether *like Wolves, ravening the Prey to ſhed Blood, and to deſtroy Souls to get diſhoneſt Gain. As the Voice of a Woman in Travail, as the Anguiſh of her that bringeth forth her firſt Child; ſuch was then the Voice of the Daughter of Sion, that bewailed herſelf, that ſpread forth her Hands, ſaying; Woe is me now! for my Soul is weary, becauſe of Murderers!*

Job xxxv. 9.

Iſa. iii. 5.

Ezek. xxii. 27.

Jer. iv. 31.

At

At laſt this Storm ceaſed, the Clouds diſperſed, and the Sun ſhone out again in his Strength; the Royal Family returned, and with it our old Conſtitution in Church and State; the Regicides ſuffered, and *the Land* ſeemed to be *cleanſed of the Royal Blood, that was ſhed therein, by the Blood of thoſe that ſhed it.* Thus, for a while, we vainly imagined; but ſad Experience ſoon undeceived us. Not many Years paſſed, before God did again empty, as it were, at once, all the Vials of his Wrath upon us: The Sword raged abroad; Fire and Peſtilence at home: And when this goodly City was laid in Aſhes, and Deſolation and Emptineſs reigned in her Streets, doubtleſs pious Perſons did often reflect, how much her miſemployed Wealth, and miſguided Zeal had formerly contributed to the Miſeries and Confuſions under which we laboured: And even they, whom a few Years Plenty and Proſperity had lulled into a Forgetfulneſs of their Guilt, began then to lay their Hands upon their Hearts, SERM. I.

SERM. I. Hearts, and with *Joſeph's* Brethren, to ſay: *Verily, we are guilty concerning our Prince; therefore is this Deſtruction come upon us!*

Gen. xlii. 21.

There was ſtill a more terrible Judgment behind, which we were threatened with, and in ſome meaſure felt, though the Providence of God did not ſuffer it thoroughly to lay hold of us: I mean, the Advances made by Popery in a late Reign toward eſtabliſhing itſelf among us. And this alſo was the Fruit of our former Iniquities; for (to ſpeak a plain Truth, which, plain as it is, has been lately treated with Scorn and Deriſion by ſhameleſs Writers) the Attempt of introducing a *Foreign Religion* was but too natural a Conſequence of our forcing the *Royal Family* to take Shelter in *Foreign Countries*; where they might be allured by the tempting Appearances of a ſplendid Worſhip, and a regular Hierarchy, and by glorious but empty Pretences to Univerſality and Infallibility; eſpecially at a Time, when the good *Frame* of

our

our Eccleſiaſtical Polity here at *home* was ſhattered and diſſolved, and the *Honour of our Sion was laid low in the Duſt.* Still therefore our Puniſhment was from ourſelves; nor was God *a hard Maſter* in inflicting it; for we *reaped* only *what we had ſowed, and gathered what we had ſtrawed*, and the *firſt* Subverſion of our Conſtitution involved us in all the Confuſions and Miſeries, in which we long *afterwards* laboured. But *that* Storm alſo blew over, and Times of *Liberty* ſucceeded, wherein we promiſed ourſelves the ſettled Enjoyment of all manner of Advantages and Bleſſings. Can we ſay, that thoſe Hopes were not in great meaſure defeated by the Spirit of Irreligion and Libertiniſm, which then, and ever ſince that Time notoriouſly prevailed; by thoſe inteſtine Factions and Diſcords, by which we have been torn; and that foreign War, under the Weight of which we for more than twenty Years groaned? Till the vaſt Expence of Blood and Treaſure, which it occaſioned, made us ready

SERM. I.

SERM. I. ready to cry out in the pathetic Words of the Prophet, *O thou Sword of the Lord, how long will it be ere thou be quiet? Put thyself up in thy Scabbard; rest, and be still!*

Jer. xlvii. 6.

And when that Sword rested in its Scabbard, was not the Manner of Sheathing it as unwelcome to us, as even the Havock it had occasioned, when naked and drawn! Was not the good Queen (now with God) the Subject of malicious, but groundless Reproaches on that very Account? Did we not murmur at the Blessing, and bring ourselves, at last, with great Difficulty to relish and approve it?

But may we not now at length hope, that all is well with us, and that the ill Consequences of spilling the Royal Blood of this Day are ceased, the Anger of God appeased, and our National Guilt utterly pardoned? How can that be, until the Nation itself hath manifestly repented? And the Repentance of a Nation for any Sin is best testified by its general Abhorrence of the Principles

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and Practices that cauſed it. And are we able in this manner to purge our- SERM. I.
ſelves of this Day's Tranſgreſſion? Do we, indeed, give evident Proofs, that we heartily and univerſally deteſt it? If that be really our Caſe, *what meaneth then this Bleating of the Sheep in our Ears, and this Lowing of the Oxen which we hear?* 1 Sam. xv. 14. How comes it to paſs, that theſe Anniverſary Humiliations are ſo openly ſpoken againſt, ill treated and derided? Why has the horrid *Guilt* of the Day been *leſſened* in Public Diſcourſes, and repreſented with all manner of Alleviations and *Softnings?* As if it were unpopular and imprudent, to paint ſuch a Villany to the Life, or to ſpeak of it in ſuitable Terms of Ignominy and Reproach! Why have the *Doctrines*, which *paved* the Way to this bloody Deed been freely revived, embraced, and cheriſhed; and *thoſe*, for which the Sufferers in the Royal Cauſe underwent all manner of Perſecutions, been diſcountenanced and exploded? Why has the Spirit of *Liberty* been indulged to

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SERM. I. an outrageous Degree of *Licentiouſneſs*; the Reverence due to Thrones ſhaken by mean and inſolent Pens; and Contempt poured on the ſacred Character of Princes, *as though they had not been anointed with Oyl?* Why have Lectures, in ſuch ſacred Places as theſe, been more than once read to the People, not only with Permiſſion, but Applauſe, inſtructing them how *near* they might approach towards the *Sin* of Rebellion, without *actually* incurring the Guilt of it? And why have impious Wretches by their *Mock Feaſts* ridiculed our *Solemn Faſts*, without being puniſhed, or (which is yet a worſe Sign) even without being detected in order to Puniſhment? Certainly, theſe are no good *Proofs* of our Abhorring the Sin of the Day; and why then ſhould we flatter ourſelves with the Thought, that God hath left off to abhor, and will no longer continue to chaſtiſe us for the Sake of it? *Truly* (to uſe our Saviour's Words) *ye bear witneſs, that ye allow the Deeds of your Fathers; for they indeed killed*

2 Sam. i. 21.

Luke xi. 48.

killed the Prophets, and ye build their Sepulchres; that is, Ye pay ſome outward Reſpect to their Aſhes, ſome ceremonious Regard to their Memories; but without renouncing the Principles, and abominating the Practices, that led to the ſpilling that *Righteous Blood*, which, therefore, we have Reaſon to fear, may be *required even of this Generation*. When, and in what manner, God will require it, he alone knows. But if we conſider the Height of all Sorts of Wickedneſs, to which we are now arrived; the open Contempt of Religion, and Scorn of ſacred Perſons and Things, that reigns among us; the inteſtine Diſcords, by which we are torn at home; the Dangers which have threatened us from abroad, and (however we may ſay, *Peace, Peace*, to ourſelves) ſtill do threaten us, we have juſt Cauſe to apprehend, that the complete Meaſure of our Iniquity is almoſt filled up, and that the Day of our Viſitation is not far off.

SERM. I.

But

SERM. I. But do not thou, *O Lord, to whom Vengeance belongeth*, do not thou deal with us according to our Deſerts; *be not diſpleaſed at us for ever, neither ſtretch out thy Wrath from one Generation to another!* Command thy *deſtroying Angel, when he goeth through the City* (as the Prophet *Ezekiel* ſpeaks) *to ſet a Mark upon the Forehead of all thoſe that ſigh, and that cry for the Abomination, which hath been done in the midſt thereof*; and either to ſpare the whole for their Sakes; or, at leaſt, not to ſmite *the Righteous* together *with the Wicked!* Make us deeply ſenſible of this, and all other our great Enormities, and of thy wondrous Lenity and Forbearance! *Teach us, even yet in this our Day* (if it be poſſible) *the Things that belong to our Peace, ere they be hid from our Eyes!* Teach us by a Reflexion on *paſt* Calamities, to prevent *new* ones, and to avoid thoſe Rocks and Shelves, on which our Fore-fathers were ſhipwrecked!

Ch. ix. 4.

Luke xix. 42.

Which

Which God of his infinite Mercy grant, through the Merits of that *Blood, which ſpeaketh better Things than the Blood of* Abel!

SERM. I.

To him, Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt, be aſcribed, as is moſt due, all Honour, Adoration, and Thanks, now, and for evermore. Amen.

The Wicked Lives of CHRISTIANS *no Argument againſt the Truth of* Chriſtianity.

A

SERMON

Preached at

St. JAMES's Chapel,

April 26, 1713.

1 TIM. vi. 1.

—— *That the Name of God, and his Doctrine be not blaſphemed.*

THE *Purity* and *Perfection* of the *Chriſtian Morality* conſidering the Meanneſs of the Perſons who pub- SERM. II.

SERM. II. liſhed that Doctrine, is a ſure Argument of its divine Original and Authority. But then the *Lives* of many *Chriſtians*, led in a Way ſo little anſwerable to the *Precepts of Chriſt*, are a mighty Diſhonour to our Religion, and give Occaſion, to thoſe who ſeek Occaſion, to reproach and blaſpheme it.

What ſignifies it, ſays the Libertine, or indeed how can one be ſatisfied, that the Goſpel is of heavenly Extraction; when we ſee, it hath no more Efficacy and Influence on the Hearts and Lives of thoſe who profeſs it, than other Religions that are of mere Human Contrivance; when there is as much Impiety, and Vice of all Sorts among thoſe *that name the Name of Chriſt*, as amongſt the *Mahometans* and *Heathens?*

This popular Objection St. *Paul* appears to have had much upon his Thoughts, and doth therefore frequently preſs his new Converts in this and other Epiſtles, to diſtinguiſh themſelves by a becoming Sanctity of Life and Manners; for *this* Reaſon, among *others*,

others, That the Name of God and his Doctrine be not blaſphemed. SERM. II.

If there were great Occaſion for ſuch Exhortations *then*, there is much greater *now*; when the Manners of *Chriſtians* are degenerated ſo far, not only from the *Precepts of Chriſt*, but even from the Pattern ſet by thoſe firſt Believers; and when there are even among thoſe, who call themſelves *Chriſtians*, *ſome*, as ready to lay hold of this Objection, and to urge it in Prejudice of our Religion, as any of the moſt determined Heathens, even *Porphyry*, *Celſus*, or *Julian* himſelf, were.

From the Words therefore, a proper Occaſion will be given me to enquire,

Firſt, What Ground there is for a Complaint of the extreme Wickedneſs of Men now under the Evangelical Diſpenſation. I.

Secondly, Allowing the Complaint to be juſt, how little Reaſon there yet would II.

SERM. II. would be for turning it to the Diſadvantage of Chriſtianity itſelf. And,

III. *Thirdly*, What are the Inferences that may more juſtly and naturally be deduced from it.

I. *Firſt*, I am to conſider, What *juſt* Ground or Colour there may be for a Complaint of the exceeding Wickedneſs of Men now under the Chriſtian Diſpenſation.

And here it may with Truth be obſerved, to the Advantage of our holy Religion, that, as bad as Men are under it, they would have yet been worſe without it; ſince, upon a juſt Compariſon of *Chriſtians*, even in theſe later Times, with the Enemies of the Croſs of *Chriſt*, it will, I am perſuaded, be found, that the Manners of the *one* are not quite ſo corrupt and vicious as thoſe of the *other*. There may perhaps be ſome *particular Chriſtians* more abandoned to all Sorts and Degrees of Impiety, than any even of the

moſt

moſt profligate Heathens (for which Inſtances I ſhall account in what follows) but ſurely *Chriſtendom*, as to the *general* State of it, is not equally ſcandalous in this reſpect, with thoſe Parts of the World, that are Strangers to *Chriſt*; thoſe Parts of it, I mean, where the Incentives to Luxury, Ambition, and every ſort of Vice do equally abound. SERM. II.

And therefore the aggravating Deſcriptions that have been given of this Matter by ſome pious and pathetical Pens, are not to be interpreted too ſtrictly. The Faults of *Chriſtians* are obvious and manifeſt to thoſe of the ſame Faith, and ſtrike our Imaginations ſtrongly on the account of their Nearneſs; whereas the Vices of the Heathen World, being practiſed at a Diſtance, and coming to our Knowledge by rare and uncertain Reports, do therefore make but faint Impreſſions on our Minds.

The Rule, by which *Chriſtians* are obliged to walk, is ſo excellent, and

SERM. II.

they are thereby ſo fully and clearly informed of the whole Extent of their Duty; the promiſed Aſſiſtances are ſo mighty, and the Rewards ſo vaſt, by which they are animated to Obedience; that *their* Tranſgreſſions, as they are attended with a deeper *Guilt*, ſo muſt needs appear to be of a more prodigious *Size*, than thoſe of *other* Men. And it is no wonder therefore, if, on *both* theſe Accounts, good and holy Perſons have ſpoken of them with a particular Degree of Deteſtation and Horror.

And as the *Vices* of *Chriſtians* are, for theſe Reaſons, open and glaring, ſo their *Virtues* oftentimes diſappear and lie hid. The profound Humility and Self-denial, which the Chriſtian Religion firſt enjoined, leads the true Diſciples of *Chriſt*, in the Exerciſe of the chief Goſpel Graces, to ſhun the Applauſe and Sight of Men, as much as is poſſible. Hence, ſome of the beſt *Chriſtians* are leaſt known to be ſuch, becauſe they make the leaſt Noiſe and Shew

Shew with their Goodneſs. There is nothing extraordinary or ſingular in their Manner of Life and Behaviour; no Oſtentation of Sanctity in Look, Word, or Deed. Notwithſtanding their Domeſtick Severities, yet, when they come abroad, they *anoint the Head, and waſh the Face, that they appear not unto Men to faſt.* They ſound no Trumpet before their Alms, or other good Works; but endeavour to perform them with that Secreſy, which our Saviour recommended, when he ſaid, *Let not thy Right Hand know what thy Left Hand doth.* SERM. II. Matt. vi. 17. Matt. vi. 3.

And of this there is *One*, though a very late, yet ſo remarkable an Inſtance, that, for the Honour of our holy Faith, I think it may deſerve to be particularly mentioned, the Inſtance, I mean, of the Author of that excellent Book, *The Whole Duty of Man*; who took not more Care to do good to the World, than he did to conceal the Doer of it; being contented to approve himſelf to him, and him only,

who

SERM. II. *who ſeeth in ſecret*, and reſolved that the Praiſe of Men, whether in his Life, or after his Death, ſhould be no Part of his Reward.

On theſe, and ſuch Accounts as theſe, I ſay, Vice, *ſeems* to have the Odds of Virtue among *thoſe, who name the Name of Chriſt*, much more than it really *hath*. However, after all the Abatements that have been, or can be made in this Caſe, ſtill it muſt be owned, That the Wickedneſs of *Chriſtians* is exceeding great, and, conſidering the ſpecial Helps towards Holineſs, which they above the reſt of the World enjoy, very amazing. Even good Men, when they find all the powerful Means of Grace propoſed in the Goſpel, to have ſo little Succeſs, are apt to be ſomewhat ſtartled at it; and ill Men do not fail to make a very ill Uſe of it, and to turn it to the Diſadvantage of Chriſtianity itſelf.

II. *Secondly*, That they are very unreaſonable in ſo doing, I am in the next place to ſhew. For,

1. The

SERM. II.

1. The holieſt and pureſt Doctrine imaginable is *but Doctrine* ſtill; it can only inſtruct, admoniſh, or perſuade; it cannot compel. The Goſpel Means of Grace, powerful as they are, yet are not, and ought not to be irreſiſtible. They are Moral Cauſes, which do not violently conſtrain our Wills and Affections; but only, by gentle Methods ſolicit and incline them. They work not like a Medicine, or a Charm, without our Concurrence and Co-operation. And therefore let the Diſcoveries of our Duty and Happineſs now made, be never ſo bright and clear, yet a Multitude of *Chriſtians* may ſtill ſo live, as if there were no ſuch Diſcoveries. And this is no greater a Wonder, than it is, that the Luſts and Paſſions of frail Men ſhould often get the better of their Reaſon; and the trueſt Senſe and Knowledge of our Duty give way in the Preſence of mighty Temptations; which always hath been, always will, and muſt be the Caſe, while Human Nature conſiſts (as it doth) of jarring Principles, and

SERM. II. and the corrupt Part of us is (as it generally is) the prevailing Ingredient in the Compoſition.

Let the *Goſpel* have never ſo *little* Succeſs in promoting Holineſs, yet all who have conſidered it, muſt own, that it is in itſelf *as* fit as any thing that can be imagined for that Purpoſe, and incomparably *more* fit than any *other* Courſe that ever was taken. If therefore the deſired *End* be not attained, we muſt not blame the *Means*, which are confeſſedly appoſite and proper, but the *Men*, who refuſe or neglect to make uſe of them. The Rules of Health, and the Preſcriptions of the Phyſician may be good; and yet few be the better for them, if few ſtrictly obſerve them. It is no Diſparagement to the Art, if thoſe receive no great Benefit from it, who do not ſurrender themſelves up to the Methods it preſcribes.

Did *Philoſophy* ſuffer in the Opinion of wiſe Men, on the Account of the *Debaucheries* that reigned in thoſe Ages,

Ages, wherein it flouriſhed moſt among the *Grecians* and *Romans?* Was it then thought a good *Inference*, that, becauſe Men were very diſſolute, when Wiſdom was at the Height, and the Light of Reaſon ſhone brighteſt, *therefore* Wiſdom and Reaſon were of little *Uſe* towards making Men *Virtuous?* No! the Excellence and Fitneſs of the Rule was univerſally acknowledged; and all the Blame was laid on thoſe, who did not comply with it. Object in the like manner againſt *natural* Religion to a *Deiſt*, and he will give you the like Anſwer. And why then ſhould he not receive the ſame Apology for *revealed* Religion, in its Turn? If the ill Conduct of thoſe, who embrace any Rule of Life and Manners, be a reaſonable Exception againſt the Rule itſelf, there's an End of all Rules whatſoever; ſince none there are, from which moſt of thoſe, who in *Theory* approve them, do not in *Practice* mightily ſwerve and decline. But, SERM. II.

2. The

SERM. II.

2. The preſent Wickedneſs of *Chriſtians* cannot be owing to any Defect in the Doctrine of *Chriſt*, nor be urged as a Proof of the real Inefficacy of it towards rendering Men holy; becauſe there *was* a Time, when it had all the Succeſs of this kind, that could be expected; the Time, I mean, of its earlieſt Appearance in the World; when the Practice of the Generality of *Chriſtians* was a juſt Comment on the Precepts of *Chriſt*; and they could appeal from their Doctrines to their Lives, and challenge their worſt Enemies to ſhew any remarkable Difference between them. When they were, as the Apoſtle ſpeaks, *blameleſs, and harmleſs, the Sons of God, without Rebuke, in the midſt of a crooked and perverſe Nation, among whom they ſhone as Lights in the World.* When they were ſo far from Injuſtice and Wrong, and the ſeveral wicked Arts of Deceiving, that, in the vaſt Multitude of Converts, *No Man ſaid that ought was his own, but they had all things common*, and

Phil. ii. 15.

Acts iv. 32.

were

were not only of one *Faith* and of one *Worſhip*, but *of one Heart, and of one Soul*. Now, if the Efficacy and Power of the Chriſtian Doctrine muſt be tried by its Fruits, why may we not have leave to take it at its firſt ſetting out, and to argue, that the moſt immediate and neareſt muſt have been the moſt natural and genuine Effects of it? He that will try the Goodneſs of a Spring, ſhould go to the Fountain Head itſelf, and not judge of it by Streams from thence at a great Diſtance derived, which many other Waters may perhaps have fallen into during its Courſe, and many impure Mixtures have defiled. SERM. II.

The Goſpel is the ſame *now*, as it was *then*; equally *the Power of God unto Salvation*, equally *mighty in pulling down of ſtrong Holds*; and therefore, that it doth not ſtill produce the *ſame* Effects, muſt be owing, not to any Ineptitude or Defect in the *Means*, but to *other* Cauſes and Conſiderations, Rom. i. 16. 2 Cor. x. 4.

ſome

SERM. II. ſome of which I ſhall now briefly explain. And,

1. There muſt needs be a great Diſparity between the *firſt Chriſtians*, and thoſe of theſe *latter* Ages; becauſe Chriſtianity was the Religion of their Choice. They took it up, while it was perſecuted, and they could have no other Inducement to receive it, but a Conviction of its Excellence, which they attained by impartial and diligent Enquiries; the Effect of which was, that the holy Precepts and precious Promiſes of the Goſpel made a lively and durable Impreſſion on them. Whereas Chriſtianity with us is generally not a Matter of Choice, but of Faſhion and good Luck. We are born, where it is profeſſed; and we fall into it, as we do into other prevailing Opinions and Cuſtoms, of Courſe; and no wonder therefore, if it floats only on the Surface of our Minds, if it *takes* not *Root downwards*, and conſequently doth not *bring Fruit upwards*, in our Life and Practice. For the Goſpel,

Iſ. xxx. 31.

though it be the great Inſtrument of Ho- SERM.
lineſs, yet can make thoſe alone Holy, II.
who conſider and weigh it, and faſten its holy Rules upon their Hearts and Conſciences by Meditation and Study.

2. °Another Account of the great Degeneracy of *Chriſtians* may be drawn from Mens erecting *new* Schemes of Chriſtianity, which interfere with the true and genuine Account of it. *Some* Men rely on the mere *Externals* of Religion, on *Maſſes*, and *Pilgrimages*, *Indulgences*, *and bodily Auſterities:* And if all *theſe* fail, they have a Reſerve ſtill, in the Merits and Interceſſions of *Saints* and *Angels*. *Others*, who call themſelves *Chriſtians*, have no regard for the *Dead Letter* of Scripture, but regulate themſelves by a certain *Light within*, by unaccountable Impulſes and Inſpirations. There are yet *others*, who hope to be ſaved by a bare Act of Recumbency on the *Merits* of *Chriſt*, and by the *Free* Grace of the Goſpel, without obſerving the *Law of Works*, without being tied to the E-

SERM. II. lements of Bondage, and carnal Ordinances,

Now *theſe Schemes* (and the ſame we might ſay of ſome *others*) ſubvert the true *Goſpel Scheme* of Salvation, by *Repentance from dead Works*, and becoming a New Creature; and as far as they do ſo, muſt needs undermine the Intereſt of Virtue and Goodneſs, and ſmooth the Way towards the Commiſſion of Wickedneſs. If all the World embraced the Doctrine of *Chriſt* in its Simplicity and Purity, without adultering it by falſe Mixtures, it would be far more Operative and Effectual than now it is, towards reforming Mens Lives, and ſanctifying their Natures. But when they frame to themſelves a Goſpel, which *Chriſt* and his Apoſtles never preached, and expect to be ſaved on any other Terms and Conditions than thoſe God hath propoſed; 'tis no wonder if from ſuch an Evil Root, as Evil Fruit ariſes; and they grow as corrupt in their Practice, as they are in their Opinions.

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The ſame may be ſaid of ſome over-eaſy and looſe, or over ſtrict and rigorous Deciſions in Matters of Conſcience. Many *modern Caſuiſts* have bent their Thoughts, and ſtrained their Wits, in order to *ſoften* the Severity of the Goſpel Morals, and to bring them down, as near as they can, not only to the *Infirmities*, but even the *Vices* of human Nature. They have invented an Art of *Lying* without *Sinning*: They have allowed a Man to act on *that* Side of an Opinion, which he is ſatisfied is *falſe*, ſo it carry but any Shew of *Probability* with it; and they have determined it to *be* probable, if two or three grave Writers of Note have eſpouſed it. They have made good *Ends* capable of Sanctifying the worſt and moſt forbidden *Means*; have declared it not neceſſary for a Man to exerciſe more than *one* Act of Love towards God in his *whole* Life-time, or to be contrite for his Sins, but on his *Death bed*. And theſe are the Poſitions, not only of a few, obſcure, but

SERM. II.

SERM. II. of very many, and very celebrated Authors; and cannot, therefore, but go on a great way towards debauching the Minds of all ſuch as have any Reverence for thoſe *Caſuiſts*.

On the other ſide, good, but miſtaken Men have ſometimes carried the Doctrine of the Goſpel to a very ſevere and aſtoniſhing Height; and framed from thence ſuch Rules of Life, and Determinations in Morality, as directly oppoſed the firſt and moſt innocent Inclinations of Human Nature. And in this they thought, they had done God and Men good ſervice; but the Event has diſproved them. For ſome Perſons finding Religion repreſented as ſo melancholy and ſour a thing, have concluded, that God, the Author of our Nature, could never be the Author of ſo unnatural and extravagant a Scheme; and have thereupon rejected it at once, and ſet themſelves looſe from all the Ties of Morality. Others, ſtill adhering to the Truth of the Doctrine, have yet been ſo far diſcouraged by the uncom-

uncomfortable and forbidding Look of it, as to lay aſide all Hopes either of duly practiſing or reliſhing it; and have therefore reſolved rather *to enjoy the Pleaſures of Sin for a Seaſon*, and run the Venture of their future Happineſs, than be certainly miſerable here, for fear of being ſo hereafter. And a third Sort there are, who have endeavoured to raiſe their Practice up to theſe Speculations; but failing (as how could they but fail?) have ſunk into Religious Deſpair, concluded themſelves Reprobates, out of the Favour of God, and a State of Salvation.

SERM. 11.

Heb. xi. 25.

So that too *eaſy* and too *ſevere* Deciſions have *alike* done Diſſervice to Religion. *Theſe*, perhaps, have frightened near as many from the Proſecution of *Virtue*, as *Thoſe* have allured to the Commiſſion of *Vice*; but the True Doctrine of the Goſpel, which ſteers between theſe Extremes, is not anſwerable for the Exceſſes on either ſide, and ought not, therefore, to be blaſ-

SERM. II.

phemed on the account of them, We may add in the

3d Place, That 'tis not to be expected, but that, where *Chriſtians* are wicked, they ſhould be rather worſe than other Men; for this very Reaſon, becauſe they have more Help towards becoming better, and yet live in the Contempt or Neglect of them. Thoſe excellent Rules of Life, which they will not ſuffer to do them Good, muſt for that very Reaſon do them Harm, if they ſet their Faces againſt ſo plain a Revelation of their Duty, and reſolve to ſin in Defiance of it. For, *if the Light that is in them be Darkneſs, how great is that Darkneſs?*

Matt. vi. 23.

How great, even according to the natural Courſe and Tendency of Things, whereby what is good, when corrupted, grows bad in proportion to its former Goodneſs: How much greater, in reſpect of the juſt Judgments of God, who puniſhes ſuch Perſons with the total Dereliction of his Spirit, and a Penal Blind-

Blindneſs; *giving thoſe up to a Reprobate Mind, who thus hold the Truth in Unrighteouſneſs.* SERM. II.

Rom. i. 28.

Laſtly, The Faith of *Chriſt* ſuffers much from the ill Lives of thoſe, who have nothing of Chriſtianity but the *Name*; and are, whilſt they reproach it for the ill Conduct of its Profeſſors, themſelves the greateſt Reproach to it. Set aſide the Diſorders of the *almoſt Chriſtians*, and of ſuch as, whatever they may outwardly profeſs, do not ſincerely and heartily love *our Lord Jeſus*; and one great Occaſion of Blaſpheming the Doctrine of *Chriſt* will be removed. 'Tis very hard therefore to make our Faith anſwerable for the ill Manners of thoſe, who do not in good Earneſt receive it; but much harder ſtill, that thoſe very Men ſhould preſs the Objection moſt eagerly, without whoſe looſe and immoral Lives, there would not be near ſo much Ground and Colour for it.

This is as if *Catiline* ſhould have declaimed againſt the Debaucheries of *Rome*, whilſt he and his Accomplices were

SERM. II. were in the Midſt of it, and had contributed to bring it to that Pitch of Wickedneſs, which they had complained of.

Many other inſtructive Reflexions might be ſuggeſted on theſe Heads; But thus much may ſuffice to ſhew, How far there is any real Occaſion for a Complaint of the exceeding Wickedneſs of Men, now under the Chriſtian Diſpenſation; and then, ſuppoſing the Complaint juſt, how little Reaſon there would be, to turn it to the Diſadvantage of Chriſtianity itſelf. It remains, that I ſhould point out to you, on my

III. *Third* General Head, ſome more proper and natural Inferences that may be drawn from it. They are *many* and *weighty*. But I will not detain you further than by the Mention of a few of them.

And, 1. This ſhould be ſo far from ſhocking our Faith, that it ought, on the contrary, to confirm and ſtrengthen it.

it. For the univerſal Degeneracy of *Chriſtians* in theſe latter Days was plainly and punctually foretold by *Chriſt* and his Apoſtles. *When the Son of Man cometh, ſhall he find Faith on the Earth?* ſaid our Saviour. *Now the Spirit ſpeaketh* (ſays St. *Paul* in his firſt Epiſtle to *Timothy*) *that in the latter Times ſome ſhall depart from the Faith giving Heed to ſeducing Spirits, and Doctrines of Devils; ſpeaking Lies in Hypocriſy, having their Conſciences ſeared with a hot Iron.* And in his ſecond Epiſtle, *This know, that in the laſt Days perilous Times ſhall come; for Men ſhall be Lovers of their own ſelves, Covetous, Boaſters, Proud, Blaſphemers:* To which he adds a large Catalogue of the blackeſt and worſt of Sins which ſhould then abound. And parallel Paſſages to theſe are alſo to be found in St. *Peter's* and St. *Jude's* Epiſtles. Now *the Teſtimony of Jeſus is that Spirit of Prophecy*; and if he therefore and his Apoſtles by that Spirit of Prophecy forewarned us of this Event, it ſhould not, methinks, leſſen our Eſteem

SERM. II.

Luke xviii. 8.

ch. iv. 1, 2.

ch. iv. 12.

ch. iii. 1, 2.

Rev. xix. 10.

of

SERM. II. of their Doctrine, to ſee that Prediction fulfilled.

Nay, the vicious Lives of the Generality of *Chriſtians* is an Argument for the Truth of Chriſtianity on another Account. For the profeſſed Deſign of God in revealing it, being to reform the World, and that Deſign being ſo remarkably defeated; were not our Religion founded on a Rock, on the moſt apparent Reaſon, and moſt inconteſtable Miracles; it muſt, a long time ago, have ſunk under the Weight of this *ſingle* Prejudice.

Acts v. 38, 39. *Had this Counſel, or this Work been of Men, it would,* under ſuch a Diſadvantage, *have* certainly *come to nought; but it being of God, nothing can overthrow it.* We may from hence in the

2d Place, Take occaſion to conſider the monſtrous Degree of Pravity and Perverſeneſs, that is hid in the Heart of Men, and to account for the Riſe of it. It is plainly ſuch, and ſo great, we ſee, as to be Proof againſt the brighteſt Diſcoveries of God's Will, and our Duty; ſuch as

no Rules can rectify, no Endeavours can reform. SERM. II.

And this *One* Reflexion, duly attended to, would ſatisfy us, that we are not now in our *Natural State*, and as we came forth from the Hands of God; but fallen and degenerated from primitive Perfection. For can it enter into the Heart of Man to conceive, that the nobleſt Part of the viſible Creation ſhould, in its Original Frame and Conſtitution, be the moſt Imperfect and Faulty? That Man ſhould have been created by God, with ſuch violent Tendencies to Evil, and ſuch rooted Averſions from Goodneſs, as at preſent diſcover themſelves in him? Even without the Light of Revelation, it would, on this very Account, be highly reaſonable for us to believe (what thoſe, who reaſoned beſt among the Heathens, the Scholars of *Socrates* did believe) that ſome Change muſt needs have happened in our Faculties and Natures, ſince they were firſt formed; and that our Souls are now placed in a State, not of natural

Dignity

SERM. II. Dignity and Excellence, but of Probation and Recovery.

3. It will be a *third* good Uſe of what has been diſcourſed, if we learn from thence, not to meaſure Doctrines by Perſons, or Perſons by Doctrines; that is, not to make the One a complete Rule and Standard, whereby to judge of the Goodneſs or Badneſs of the Other. I cannot now duly explain this Reflexion, and ſhall therefore employ it only in order to wipe off a Reproach that hath been ſometimes caſt on that excellent *Church*, of which we are Members; as if ill Livers abounded more than ordinarily in *her* Communion. I truſt in God, the Aſperſion is utterly falſe and groundleſs; the mere Effect of Malice, Envy, or Deſign. But, were it never ſo true, yet would not this be a Touchſtone to try her Doctrines by; ſince for the ſame Reaſon that the *Wickedneſs* of *Chriſtians* in *general* is no Argument againſt the *Truth* of Chriſtianity, the Wickedneſs to be found in any *particular* Society of *Chriſtians*, can be no Objection

jection againſt the *Doctrines* particularly profeſſed in that Society. By *Scripture* and by *Reaſon* Religious Opinions are to be examined; and not by the Lives and Practice of thoſe who eſpouſe them. SERM. II.

However, ſince the World is for the moſt part compoſed of ſuch as do not reaſon rightly, but judge merely by outward Appearances; ſince Mankind are generally ſo made, that the holieſt Religion in the World muſt needs ſuffer in their Opinions, on the Account of the ill Lives of thoſe who profeſs it; let us therefore make this

4th and laſt Uſe of what has been ſaid, To excite ourſelves from thence to do what in us lies towards removing this Scandal from the Chriſtian Faith at large, and from that particular Church of *Chriſt* to which we belong; both by living *Ourſelves*, as becomes our holy Religion; and by influencing *Others*, as we have Ability and Opportunity, to live as *we* do; that ſo both *we*, and *they* may *adorn the Doctrine of God our Saviour in all Things*; may render it lovely and deſirable in the Tit. ii. 10.

Eyes

SERM. II. Eyes of all Men, even its fierceſt Enemies and Oppoſers; *having our Converſation* (as the Apoſtle ſpeaks) *honeſt among the Gentiles* (and thoſe who are worſe than *Gentiles*; *Chriſtians* in Name and Profeſſion, but at the Bottom hardned and feared Unbelievers) *that, whereas they ſpeak againſt us as Evildoers, they may by our good Works, which they ſhall behold, glorify God in the Day of Viſitation.*

1 Pet. ii. 12.

The *primitive Chriſtians* (as you have heard) appealed freely from their *Doctrines* to their *Lives*, in Confirmation of the Truth of Chriſtianity: *We*, on the contrary, are forced to appeal from our *Lives* to our *Doctrines*; and to ſhelter ourſelves under the indiſputable Goodneſs of the Rule we embrace, whilſt we are guilty of very many, and very great Deviations from it. Let us be aſhamed to make uſe of this Argument any longer, and reſolve to render our *Actions* and *Opinions* perfectly *conſiſtent*; that ſo our *Religion* may appear to be, not a Notional *Syſtem*, but a vital and fruitful *Principle of Holineſs*; and we may

may ſave not only our own Souls, but the Souls of many others alſo, who ſhall be won over to the *Obedience of the Faith*, by *obſerving our good Converſation in* Chriſt Jeſus. SERM. II.

To whom, with the Father, and bleſſed Spirit, be aſcribed all Majeſty, Might, and Praiſe, now and for ever. Amen.

The

The Fear of God a Motive to Holineſs.

A SERMON

Preached at

St. JAMES's Chapel,

March 20, 1718-19.

PHIL. vi. 1.

Work out your own Salvation with Fear and Trembling.

THE wiſe and good Author of our Nature, foreſeeing that, in this degenerate and corrupted State of it, the Rules of Duty he preſcribed, would not, without great Difficulty and Reluctance be complied with, hath been graciouſly

SERM. III.

SERM. III. pleaſed to addreſs himſelf, not to our *Reaſon* only, but our *Paſſions* alſo, and to enforce his *Cammands*, by propoſing, together with them, ſuch *Motives* and *Conſiderations*, as (he *knew)* would have the *greateſt* Influence towards determining our Choice; towards ſecuring, and enlivening our Chriſtian Obedience. And the moſt operative of theſe Motives ſeems to be *that*, which applies itſelf to our *Fears*, and urges upon us the ſtrict Practice of Virtue, by the *Threats* of divine Vengeance, which will certainly attend our Diſobedience. This Conſideration the ſacred Writers frequently inculcate; and particularly St. *Paul* in the Words of the Text, wherein he exhorts the *Philippians* to *work out their own Salvation with Fear and Trembling.*

On which Words I intend to build this plain, but uſeful Propoſition, That "A *Fear* of God's Wrath, and of eter-"nal Puniſhment, is a *proper* and *ſuffi-"cient* Motive to lead Men to Holi-"neſs." This ſeems to be a very *evident* Truth; and yet thoſe, who have

to

to deal with ſcrupulous Conſciences, I SERM. know, that ſome very pious and well- III. meaning *Chriſtians*, do in good earneſt doubt of it; and will not allow themſelves to be in a *Regenerate* Eſtate, or to have a ſure Title to the Divine Favour, becauſe their Repentance wholly took its Riſe at the firſt, and hath ſince perhaps in ſome meaſure received its Growth and Increaſe from that baſe and ſlaviſh Principle of *Fear*, to which, they imagine, the true *Sons of Adoption* and *the Elect of God* are always Strangers.

To remove the Scruples, under which ſuch good, but miſtaken Men labour, ſhall be the Buſineſs of my preſent Diſcourſe: Wherein I will endeavour,

Firſt, By ſome *general* Reflections to I. leſſen the ill Opinion, which theſe Perſons entertain of themſelves: And then proceed,

Secondly, To *prove* more directly, II. that the Principle, from which their

SERM. III. Repentance and Obedience hath ſprung, is ſuch, as they may ſecurely rely on. And,

Firſt, I deſire them to conſider, that although the Goſpel doth (almoſt in every Page of it) repreſent to us the Neceſſity of Repentance in *general*; yet, as to any particular Motive, from whence this Change of Mind and Manners muſt *neceſſarily* flow, it is altogether ſilent. Which ſeems to intimate this Truth, That if a Man be but ſincerely and throughly Good, it matters not much out of what Principle he *firſt* became ſo: *Elſe* the Scripture, which ſo often and earneſtly preſſes upon us the *one*, would have laid ſome Streſs on the *other* alſo. It is ſaid indeed that we muſt *Love the Lord our God with all our Heart, and with all our Soul, and with all our Mind, and with all our Strength*; that we muſt *walk in his Ways, and keep all his Commandments*; but it is no where determined, from what *Motive* this our *Love* and *Obedience* muſt

Luke x. 27.

muſt *originally* ſpring, in order to find Acceptance with God. And therefore, where no expreſs Directions are given, there the Divine Goodneſs ſeems to have indulged a Latitude. And why then ſhould we make the *Way that leads to* Eternal *Life, narrower*, and the *Gates ſtraiter*, than God himſelf appears to have made it? But, SERM. III.

2. It ſeems a little unequal and preposterous in theſe Perſons, to lay ſo great a Streſs on their *Fears* in *One* Reſpect, when they diſtruſt them ſo much in *Another*. For the State of their Caſe is plainly this, — That by a *Dread* of Divine Vengeance they were at firſt ſcared from the Practice of Vice, and led into the Paths of Virtue: And it is the *ſame* religious Dread that now inclines them to ſuſpect, and condemn themſelves, on that very account, They *fear* they have not repented in that manner they ought to have done, becauſe their *Repentance* was at firſt the Effect of their *Fear*; that is, they al-

SERM. III.

low the Suggeſtions of this Paſſion to have a great deal of Weight in the latter Caſe, but none at all in the former, Which is, at one and the ſame time, to pay too *much*, and too *little* Regard to it, and to *condemn ourſelves* (as St. *Paul* elſewhere ſpeaks) *in that thing we allow.* And the Judgments Men paſs on their own Condition, from ſuch inconſiſtent and confuſed Views as theſe, muſt needs be very uncertain, and unfit to be relied on. Nay,

Rom. xiv. 22.

3. It is no ſlight Token of a Man's being really and ſincerely Good, and upon ſuch Principles and Grounds as are well-pleaſing to God, in that he *ſuſpects* himſelf not to be ſo: Since we rarely find any but the beſt and moſt religious Minds, entertaining ſuch little *Doubts*, and encouraging ſuch nice *Scruples* as theſe. The bold preſumptuous Sinner goes on *hardly* in his way; careleſs and fearleſs; without looking backward to the Point from whence he ſet out, or forward to the End of his Journey. *He repenteth not*

of

of his Wickedneſs (according to the Deſcription given of him by the Prophet *Jeremy*) *ſaying, What have I done? but turneth again to his Courſe, as the Horſe ruſheth into the Battle.* The *Hypocrite* on the other ſide, is as ſecure and well ſatisfyed in *his* Way, having acted his Part ſo long, as to come at laſt to think it real, and to deceive even his own Heart, as well as the Eyes and Obſervations of others; and contenting himſelf with a demure Shew and Face of Religion, without any troubleſome Doubts or Miſgivings. But it is the good and conſcientious Man chiefly, that is uneaſy and diſſatisfied with himſelf; always ready to condemn his own Imperfections, and to ſuſpect his own Sincerity upon the ſlighteſt Occaſions. He deſires *ſo much* and earneſtly to pleaſe God, that he can never think he pleaſes him *as much* as he ought to do. Every wry Step, by which he imagines himſelf to have declined from the Path of Duty, *affrights* him when he reflects on it;

SERM. III.

Jer. xviii. 6.

SERM. III. every the leaſt Obliquity in Thought, Word, and Deed, ſeems conſiderable to him. So that theſe Suſpicions and Godly Jealouſies do, I ſay, uſually abound *moſt* there, where there is leaſt need of them; and it is (generally ſpeaking) a very good Sign of a Man's loving God heartily and in good earneſt, when he begins to doubt, whether he loves him or no; and ſuſpects even the beſt *Fruits* of Holineſs, which ſhine in his Life and Practiſe, becauſe he cannot look back with Satisfaction on the *Principle* of Fear, from whence they flowed. And therefore theſe very Scruples and Jealouſies, which he thus cheriſhes, concerning the Goodneſs of his State, would really afford Matter of ſound Comfort to him, if he had but Skill and Courage enough to make a right Uſe of them.

In order to convince him of which Truth, after premiſing theſe *general* Reflexions, I proceed now, as I propoſed, more *particularly* and *directly* to prove,

"That a Fear of God's Wrath and "of eternal Puniſhment, is a proper "and ſufficient Motive to lead Men to "Holineſs." SERM. III.

This will appear, if we conſider,

1. The *Paſſion* itſelf, its *Riſe*, *Nature*, and *Uſe*.

2. The natural *Apprehenſions* we have of God, as a *Lawgiver*, *Judge*, and *Avenger*.

3. The *Depth* of Sin, into which ſome Men are plunged; and *out of* which nothing but Motives of Terror and Aſtoniſhment can poſſibly raiſe them.

1. The Paſſion of *Fear* is natural to us, and was given us by God for our Safety and Convenience; to warn us of impending Dangers, and to put us upon finding out proper Ways for avoiding them. When therefore this Paſſion imprints on our Minds a lively Senſe of the Puniſhment due to Sin, of the Diſpleaſure of God, of the mighty and inſupportable Torments of Hell; and doth from hence excite and quicken

us

SERM. III. us into the Practice of Virtue; when it doth this, I ſay, it doth its Duty, and ſerves the very End for which it was implanted in our Nature. Every thing, that God made, is *good*; that is, there is ſome good Uſe or other, to which it may be put. And certainly our *Fears* muſt then be of the greateſt Uſe to us, when they are turned upon their moſt proper and important Object, *Everlaſting Burnings*. Do we think, they were deſigned to admoniſh us only of ſome *ſlighter* Harms, which may reach our Bodies, or our Fortunes? to keep us awake and alarmed in relation to the Evils of *this* Life alone, without extending to thoſe of *another*, as *certain* as theſe, and far *greater* than theſe in *Degree* and *Duration?* We may as well Imagine, that *Reaſon* was given us, merely as an help towards managing the little Affairs of this *preſent* World to our Advantage, without any regard to what is *future*; to make us wiſe and prudent in our ſhort and momentary Deſigns upon Happineſs,

Happineſs, without aſſiſting us in the Diſcovery and Purſuit of eternal Felicity. Certainly, as Man is a Creature framed for *Religion*, ſo every one of his Faculties and Affections was originally ordained to the ſame End that *he* himſelf was; and *may* therefore to that purpoſe be *uſefully*, and is always moſt *fitly* employed. His *Fears* therefore, and his *Hopes*, and all the other Paſſions that belong to the reaſonable Nature, were given him, as much for *religious* Uſes, as his very *Soul* and his *Being* were. So that when the *Terrors of the Lord perſuade Men*, a natural *End* is ſerved by a natural *Paſſion*; and, upon theſe Terms, we may be ſure, the *Author* of our *Nature* will not refuſe our Obedience.

SERM. III.

2. This will *further appear*, in the *next* Place, from the natural *Apprehenſions* we have of *God*, when we conſider him as the *Object* of our *Duty* and Service: It is plain, that we do then repreſent him to ourſelves, as a *Lawgiver*; that is, as one who preſcribes a *Rule* to our Actions, and will puniſh the

SERM. III. the *Breach* of it. We cannot conceive him as giving a *Law* without a *Sanction*, that is, without repreſenting him at the ſame time to ourſelves, as *enforcing* that Law with a *Threat*, and *ſecuring* the Obſervance of it by ſome *Penalty* annexed. This is the Method of all *Inferior* Legiſlators, and is from thence eaſily and naturally transferred by us to the *Supreme*. So that our *firſt* and moſt *immediate* Conceptions of God, by which we are excited to our Duty, involve in them this very *Motive* we are ſo apt to ſuſpect; and we cannot propoſe to ourſelves the One, without feeling in ſome meaſure the Powers and Force of the Other.

To obſerve God's Laws under a Proſpect of *Reward*, is what many of thoſe, who reject a Principle of *Dread*, will not deny to be a reaſonable and ſufficient *Inducement* to Virtue. Now, how our *deſiring a Good* ſhould make what we do on that account acceptable in the Eyes of God, and yet that very thing be unacceptable, when done to *avoid* an *Evil*;

Evil; how the *Hope* of Reward ſhould be a *good* Motive, and yet the *Fear* of loſing that Reward be an *ill* one, is hard to determine. It is on each ſide, the *Selfiſhneſs* of the Principle, and the Mixture of our own *Intereſt* with it, that ſeems to leſſen its Worth. And I cannot ſee, how our *Intereſt* is leſs concerned in purſuing *Pleaſure*, than in flying *Pain*. SERM. III.

Indeed, the nobleſt and moſt commendable Reaſon of our ſerving God is, our *Love* of him. God is *Love*, and he *chiefly* delights in thoſe diſintereſted Duties which ſpring from *that* Principle. However, he hath been pleaſed to condeſcend to the *Weakneſs*, nay to the *Baſeneſs* of our Natures, and to accept our bounden Duty and Service, upon much lower Terms. He hath thought fit to *allure* and to *frighten* us into Obedience; and him that comes even *this* way *to him, he will in no wiſe caſt out*.

3. To ſtrengthen this Proof yet further, let us, in the *third* place, take a View

SERM. III. View of the State and Condition of profligate Sinners. We ſhall find it to be *ſuch*, that nothing but *Terror* can any ways lay hold of them. It is poſſible for a Man that is ſunk into all manner of Vice and Impurity, to be ſtruck on a ſudden with the Beauty of Virtue and Goodneſs, with the Love of God, and of his infinite Perfections? Can he (do we think) recover himſelf, by reflecting on the Deformity and Turpitude of Sin, on the Dignity of his Nature, and of that divine Character and Reſemblance which he bears? Alas! let Virtue be never ſo lovely, Goodneſs never ſo deſirable; yet *He* hath no *Eyes* to *ſee* it, no *Heart* to *deſire* it. He hath loſt the Taſte of every thing, but thoſe very Delights, in which he indulges himſelf; and Reaſon is no longer Reaſon to him, than it pleads for his Enjoyments. Now what, I ſay, can poſſibly rouſe ſuch a Creature as this, ſo loſt to all ingenuous Motives, but the Senſe of divine Vengeance, and the Dread of eternal Puniſhments? The *Terrors of Hell* may

may ſtill perhaps *perſuade* him to con- SERM.
ſider (for *Fear* will find an Entrance III.
where no other Paſſion can) but to all
Arguments beſides he is perfectly im-
penetrable.

Indeed, *after* that the *Wrath* of God hath terrified him into Reflexions on his wretched State, and into Reſolutions of quitting it, there is room for *other* Motives to come in, and *finiſh* the Work thus *begun*; to improve his Contrition, and raiſe his Reſentments, and build him up in the Practice of all manner of Holineſs. But ſtill the leading Step towards Repentance muſt, I ſay, proceed from his *Fear*; which therefore is a ſure Foundation for all Penitents to build on, unleſs we can ſuppoſe that God ever leaves Men in *Sin*, without affording them any one proper Motive to ſtir them up to *Virtue*; an opinion not eaſily to be entertained of infinite Goodneſs.

Why then ſhould the pious *Chriſtian* harbour any Doubts of this Kind in his Breaſt? *O, why ſhould his Soul be caſt* Pſ. xlii. 5.
down,

SERM. III.

down, and his Spirit diſquieted within him? There is no Room for Deſpondency of Mind in ſuch a State as His; no Reaſon, why that Dread of Divine Wrath, which frightened him at *firſt* into the Ways of Virtue, ſhould continue to haunt and purſue him *ſtill*, now he is far advanced in them. The *only Fears*, which will be prejudicial to him, and which he ought to diſmiſs, are thoſe concerning the *Validity* of his Repentance. His *other Fears* were agreeable to Nature, and Reaſon, and to thoſe Methods, which the Divine Wiſdom hath thought fit to make uſe of for reclaiming Sinners. To ſerve God out of *Love*, and *Love* only, without the leaſt Mixture or Allay of any baſer Principle, is the Privilege of Angels and bleſſed Spirits who live in the Preſence of God. It will *hereafter* be the Reward of our having lived as became the Goſpel, but it cannot be matter of ſtrict Duty to us *now*. Lower and leſs noble Ends muſt influence us, while we are in this State of Imperfection:

Till

Till *that which is perfect is come*, that *which is in part* need not, and cannot *be done away*. Therefore *why is his Soul caſt down, and why is his Spirit diſquieted within him?* SERM. III.

To all this perhaps the dejected *Chriſtian*, for whoſe ſake I have entered on this Argument, will reply, That the Fear of eternal Puniſhment is, indeed, a proper and ſufficient Motive to lead Men to Holineſs, if it be *ſuch* a Fear of God's Power and Juſtice, as is ſweetly allayed and tempered by a Senſe of his Goodneſs; that is, if it be an *Evangelic* and *Filial* Fear, compoſed of an equal Mixture of Awe and Delight, of Love and Reverence; for to ſuch a Fear as this the moſt eminent Saints of God were no Strangers, ſince they *ſerved the Lord with Fear* (as good *David* ſpeaks) *and rejoiced before him with Reverence.*

But alas! *His* is altogether a *Legal* and a *Servile* Fear; a ſullen, gloomy Paſſion, without the leaſt Mixture of any thing Joyous and Delightful; a

SERM. III. mere Dread of Omnipotence, armed with Vengeance, which preſents the Rod to him as lifted up, and makes him tremble at the Sight of it; and forces him on towards his Duty, *without*, and *againſt* Inclination, merely as Beaſts of Sacrifice are dragged to the Horns of the Altar. This is *his* wretched Caſe; no Glimpſe of Light appears in any Corner of his Soul; no comfortable Reflexions on the Goodneſs and Mercy of God ſhine inwardly upon him; but the Face of his Mind is all covered with Darkneſs, Diſtruſt, and Horror. And how can the Services that flow from ſuch a Temper as *this*, be acceptable to that God, who is all Love and Light, and is pleaſed only with a willing Mind, and a *cheerful Giver?* This is the ſad Account which ſome Men give of themſelves without Cauſe. To rectify it, let them conſider

1ſt, Hath this Principle, which they thus blame, done the Work of a better? Hath it made them Charitable, Humble, Temperate, Devout? Hath it

it enabled them *to purify themſelves from all Spot and Blemiſh*, and to *adorn the Doctrine of their God and Saviour in all Things?* If it hath, they may put what Odious Names upon it, and dreſs it up in what frightful Shapes they pleaſe; but it is certainly ſuch a Principle, as will bear the Teſt, and, if they continue to be directed by it, will at laſt carry them to Heaven. Be not deceived, *He that doth Righteouſneſs, is Righteous*; and as ſuch, ſhall receive a Recompence at the great Day of Account, though he became ſo upon the loweſt and leaſt valuable Conſiderations: The Meanneſs of the Motive, which induced him to obey, ſhall not rob him of the Rewards which are due to Obedience. And therefore the Diſtinction between a *Legal* and *Servile* Fear is here miſtaken and miſapplied. For a *Servile* Fear (in the true Notion of it) is *ſuch* a Dread of divine Vengeance, as hath no ſaving Influence upon Men's Lives and Converſations; *ſuch* as Maleſactors are ſeized with, when under the Sentence of Execution,

SERM. III.

Tit. ii. 10.

1 John iii. 7.

SERM. III. and without Hopes of eſcaping it; *ſuch* as Ill Men feel, who go on obſtinately in their Ill Courſes, *notwithſtanding it*; and *ſuch*, under which the Devils themſelves bow and tremble, though without altering, in the leaſt, their diabolical Natures by the Means of it. But this is far from being the Caſe of that Man, who *works out his own Salvation with Fear and Trembling*: And therefore, we miſcall *ſuch* Fears as theſe, when we term them *Servile*: For that is always in the Accounts of right Reaſon, and will be eſteemed in the Sight of God, a true *Filial Fear*, which works by a true *Filial Obedience*. But,

2dly, It is *further* probable, that theſe melancholy Perſons do repreſent their own inward Senſe of Things worſe than it deſerves; and perſuade themſelves into an Opinion, that they Love God leſs, and Dread him more than perhaps they really do. For (as I hinted at the Beginning of this Diſcourſe) it is ſcarce conceivable that any Men, who are not ſincerely good, ſhould diſquiet themſelves with ſuch

ſuch Scruples about the Ends and Motives which inclined them to Goodneſs. It is their Fear of not Loving God as *much* as they *ought* to do, which makes them apprehend that they do not love him *at all*. And therefore, inſtead of turning their Eyes *inwardly* upon the Ideas, which they have lodged in their frightful Imagination, let them direct them upon the *outward* Effects of their Fears; inſtead of puzzling themſelves about the true *Principle* of Holineſs, let them take a comfortable Proſpect of the genuine *Fruits* of it, which abound in their Life and Practice. And then their Doubts will all diſappear, their Scruples will vaniſh; and they will be ſatisfied, that the Love of God *hath* that Place which it *ought* to have in their Hearts, in as much as they *Obey* him: *For in this we know that we love God, if we keep his Commandments.* But, SERM. III. John xiv. 15.

3dly and *laſtly*, Let the Men who are under theſe Apprehenſions, make a right Uſe of them; not diſturb and terrify themſelves with ſuch Thoughts, but take

SERM. III. Occaſion from thence to gain Ground upon themſelves, and to advance faſter in the Ways of Religion; and to excite in their Hearts ſuch a fervent and exalted Love of God, as ſhall leave no room for any Doubts and Miſgivings. It is true, that *perfect Love caſteth out Fear*; but ſuch a Degree of Divine Love is ſcarce attainable here: However, we may aſpire and approach ſtill nearer and nearer towards this Perfection. How much ſoever we have conquered our *Dread* of God, and improved our *Love* of him, we may go on ſtill to dread him leſs, and to love him more, till we come at laſt to be *rooted and grounded in Love, and be able to comprehend, with all Saints, what is the Breadth, and Length, and Depth, and Height, and to know the Love of Chriſt, which paſſeth Knowledge.*

Epheſ. iii. 17, 18, 19.

To Him, together with the Father, and the Holy Ghoſt, &c.

The

The Terrors of Conſcience.

A

SERMON

Preached at

St. *PAUL'S*

Before the

LORD MAYOR,

May 30, 1703.

MATTH. xiv. 1, 2, 3.

At that Time Herod *the* Tetrarch *heard of the Fame of* Jeſus, *and ſaid unto his Servants, This is* John *the* Baptiſt, *He is riſen from the Dead; and therefore mighty Works do ſhew forth themſelves in him. For* Herod *had laid hold on* John, *and bound him, and put him in Priſon,* &c.

THE Wicked (ſays the Prophet) *are like the troubled Sea, when it cannot reſt, whoſe Waters caſt up Mire and Dirt.* That

SERM. IV.

Iſ. lvii. 20.

SERM. IV. That is, Men of flagitious Lives are ſubject to great Uneaſineſs: Whatever Calm and Repoſe of Mind they may ſeem for a Seaſon to enjoy, yet anon, a quick and pungent Senſe of Guilt (awakened by ſome Accident) riſes like a Whirlwind, ruffles and diſquiets them throughout, and turns up to open View, from the very Bottom of their Conſciences, all the Filth and Impurity which had ſettled itſelf there. A Truth, of which there is not, perhaps, in the whole Book of God, a more apt and lively Inſtance, than that which the Paſſage I have read from the Evangeliſt ſets before us. The crying Guilt of *John* the Baptiſt's Blood ſat but ill, no doubt, on the Conſcience of *Herod*, from the Moment of his ſpilling it. However, his inward Anguiſh and Remorſe was ſtifled and kept under for a time, by the Splendor and Luxury in which he lived, till he *heard of the Fame of Jeſus*; and then his Heart ſmote him, at the Remembrance of the Inhuman Treatment he had given to ſuch another Juſt and Good

Good Man; and wrung from him a Confeſſion of what he felt, by what he uttered on that Occaſion. *He ſaid unto his Servants, This is John the Baptiſt! He is riſen from the Dead! and therefore mighty Works do ſhew forth themſelves in him.* There could not be a wilder Imagination than this, or which more betrayed the Agony and Confuſion of Thought, under which he laboured. He had often heard *John* the Baptiſt preach, and muſt have known that the Drift of all his Sermons was, to prepare the *Jews* for the Reception of a Prophet, *mightier than Him*, and *whoſe Shoes he was not worthy to bear*. Upon the Arrival of that Prophet, ſoon afterwards, *Herod's* frighted Conſcience gives him no Leiſure to recollect what his Meſſenger had ſaid; but immediately ſuggeſts to him, That this was the murdered *Baptiſt* himſelf! *Herod*, as appears from Hiſtory, was, though *Circumciſed*, little better than an *Heathen* in his Principles and Practices; or, if ſincerely a *Jew*, was, at moſt, but of the Sect of the *Sadducees*,

SERM. IV.

SERM. IV. *ducees*, who *ſaid, there was no Reſurrection*; and yet, under the preſent Pangs and Terrors of his Guilt, he imagines, that *John* was *riſen from the Dead*, on purpoſe to reprove him. It was the *Baptiſt's* diſtinguiſhing Character, that he *did no Miracles*, nor pretended to the Power of doing them; and yet even from hence the diſturbed Mind of *Herod* concludes, that it muſt be *He*, becauſe *mighty Works did ſhew forth themſelves in him*. And ſo great was his Conſternation and Surpriſe, that it broke out before Thoſe, who ſhould leaſt have been Witneſſes of it: For he Whiſpers not his guilty Fears to a Boſom Friend, to the Partner of his Crime, and of his Bed; but forgets his high State and Character, and declares them *to his* very *Servants*. Surely nothing can be more juſt and appoſite than the Alluſion of the Prophet, in reſpect to this Wicked Tetrarch; He is *like the troubled Sea, when it cannot reſt, whoſe Waters caſt up Mire and Dirt*. And ſuch is every one, that ſins with an high Hand, againſt the

Matt. xxii. 23.

Joh. x. 41.

the clear Light of his Conſcience: Although he may reſiſt the Checks of it at firſt, yet he will be ſure to feel the Laſhes and Reproaches of it afterwards. The Avenging Principle within us will certainly do *Its* Duty, upon any eminent Breach of *Ours*; and make every flagrant Act of Wickedneſs, even in this Life, a Puniſhment to itſelf. SERM. IV.

With this general Propoſition the particular Inſtance of the Text (duly opened and conſidered) will furniſh us: And this Propoſition therefore I now purpoſe, by God's Bleſſing, to handle and enforce; and, in order to fix a due, lively, and laſting Senſe of it upon our Minds, I ſhall, in what follows, conſider *Conſcience*, not as a mere *Intellectual Light*, or *Informing Faculty*, a *Dictate* of the *Practical Underſtanding* (as the Phraſe of the Schools is) which Directs, Admoniſhes, and Influences us, in what we *are to do*; but as it is a *Light upon* the Soul by a Reflection on what we *have done*; and is, by that Means, the Source and

SERM. IV. and Cauſe of all that Joy, or Dejection of Mind, of thoſe internal Senſations (if I may ſo ſpeak) of Pleaſure or Pain, which attend the Practice of great Virtues or great Vices; and begin that Heaven, and that Hell in us here, which will be our Sure and Eternal Portion hereafter. *The Spirit* (or Conſcience) *of Man is the Candle of the Lord*, which not only *diſcovers* to us, by its Light, wherein our Duty conſiſts; but *revives* alſo, and *chears* us with its bright Beams, when we do *well*; and, when we do *ill*, is as a *burning Flame*, to ſcorch, and conſume us.

Prov. xx. 27.

As ſuch, I ſhall conſider it in my preſent Diſcourſe: Wherein,

Firſt, I ſhall endeavour to Illuſtrate this plain but weighty Truth (for indeed it needs *Illuſtration* only, and not *Proof*) by ſome Conſiderations drawn from *Scripture*, *Reaſon*, and *Experience*.

Secondly,

Secondly, I ſhall account for a parti- SERM.
cular and preſſing *Difficulty*, that ſeems IV.
to attend the Proof of it. And,

Thirdly and *laſtly*, I ſhall apply it to III.
(the proper Object of *all* our Admonitions from the Pulpit, but moſt eſpecially of *this*) the *Hearts* and *Conſciences* of the Hearers.

Firſt, I am to illuſtrate this Truth by I.
ſome Conſiderations drawn from Scripture, Reaſon, and Experience.

That *Guilt* and *Anguiſh* are inſeparable, and that the Puniſhment of a Man's Sin begins always from Himſelf, and from his own Reflexions, is a Truth every where ſuppoſed, appealed, to, and inculcated in *Scripture*. The Conſequence of the *firſt* Sin that was ever committed in the World, is *there* ſaid to have been, that our offending Parents *perceived* their own Nakedneſs, and *fled* from the Preſence of God:

That

SERM. IV. That is, a conſcious *Shame* and *Fear* ſucceeded in the room of loſt Innocence; and the *Preſages* of their own Minds, thoſe *Auguria Pœnæ futuræ* (of which even the Heathen Moraliſts ſpeak) anticipated the Sentence of Divine Vengeance. In relation to this Office of Conſcience it is, that the inſpired Writers ſpeak of it (in Terms borrowed from the awful Solemnities of Human Judicatories) as *bearing Witneſs* againſt us, as *Accuſing, or Excuſing, Judging, and Condemning* us. And the Prophet therefore adds this Woe to the other Menaces, which he had denounced on a diſobedient and profligate People, that *their own Wickedneſs ſhould correct them, and their Backſliding ſhould reprove them:* A Correction ſo ſevere and terrible, that *Solomon* balancing the Outward Afflictions of Life, and Bodily Pains, with the Inward Regrets and Torments of a guilty Mind, pronounces the former of theſe to be Light and Tolerable in compariſon of the latter: *The Spirit of a Man* (ſays he) *will ſuſtain his Infirmities;*

Rom. ii. 15.

Jer. ii. 19.

Prov. xviii. 14.

firmities; but a wounded Spirit who can bear? SERM. IV.

Iſaiah deſcribes the diſmal Reflexions, and foreboding Thoughts that harbour in ſuch a Breaſt, after this Manner: *The Sinners of Sion are afraid, Fearfulneſs hath ſurpriſed the Hypocrites: Who ſhall dwell with devouring Flames? Who ſhall dwell with everlaſting Burnings?* Is. xxxiii. 14. But no Part of Scripture gives us ſo lively an Account of this inward Scene of Dejection and Horror, as the *Pſalms* of Penitent *David:* In one of them, particularly, he thus complains: *Mine Iniquities are gone over my Head, as an heavy Burthen; they are too heavy for me. I am feeble and ſore broken, I have roared, by reaſon of the Diſquietneſs of my Heart. I am troubled, I am bowed down greatly; I go mourning all the Day long. My Heart panteth, my Strength faileth me; and as for the Light of mine Eyes, it is alſo gone from me. For thine Arrows ſtick faſt in me, and thy Hand preſſeth me ſore: There is no Soundneſs in my Fleſh, be-* Pſ. xxxviii

cauſe

SERM. IV. *cauſe of thine Anger; neither is there any Reſt in my Bones, becauſe of my Sin.*

This is the Expreſſive Language of Holy Writ, when it would ſet out to us the Diſorders and Uneaſineſs of a guilty ſelf-condemning Mind. And,

2. There is nothing in theſe Repreſentations *particular* to the *Times* and *Perſons*, on which they point; nothing but what happens alike to *all* Men in *like* Caſes; and is the genuine and neceſſary Reſult of offending againſt the Light of our Conſciences. Nor is it poſſible, indeed, in the Nature of the Thing, that Matters ſhould be otherwiſe. It is the Way, in which Guilt doth and muſt always operate. For *Moral* Evil can no more be committed, than *Natural* Evil can be ſuffered, without Anguiſh and Diſquiet; Whatever doth Violence to the plain Dictates of our Reaſon concerning Virtue and Vice, Duty and Sin, will as certainly diſcompoſe and afflict our Thoughts, as a Wound will raiſe a Smart

Smart in the Fleſh that receives it. *Good* and *Evil*, whether *Natural* or *Moral*, are but other Words for *Pleaſure* and *Pain*, Delight and Uneaſineſs: At leaſt, tho' they may be diſtinguiſhed in the *Notion*, yet are they not to be ſeparated in *Reality*; but the one of them, wherever it is, will conſtantly and uniformly excite and produce the other. *Pain* and *Pleaſure* are the Springs of all human Actions, the great Engines, by which the wiſe Author of our Natures governs and ſteers them to the Purpoſes, for which he ordained them. By *theſe*, annexed to the Perception of Good and Evil, he inclines us powerfully to purſue the one, and to avoid the other; to purſue *natural Good*, and to avoid *natural Evil*, by delightful or uneaſy Senſations, that immediately affect the *Body*; to purſue *moral Good*, and to avoid *moral Evil*, by pleaſing or painful Impreſſions made on the *Mind*. From hence it is, that we ſo readily chooſe or refuſe, do or forbear every

SERM. IV.

SERM. IV. thing that is profitable or noxious to us, and requiſite to preſerve or perfect our Beings. And becauſe it is an *End* of far greater Importance, and more worthy of our All-wiſe Creator's Care, to ſecure the Integrity of our *moral*, than of our *natural* Perfections; therefore he hath made the Pleaſures and Pains, ſubſervient to this purpoſe, more extenſive and durable; ſo that the inward Complacence we find in acting reaſonably and virtuouſly, and the Diſquiet we feel from vicious Choices and Purſuits, is protracted beyond the Acts themſelves, from whence it aroſe; and renewed often upon our Souls, by diſtant *Reflexions*; whereas the Pleaſures and Pains, attending the Perceptions of natural Good and Evil, are bounded within a narrower Compaſs, and do ſeldom ſtay long, or return with any Force upon the Mind, after a Removal of the Objects that occaſioned them.

Hence then the Satisfactions, or Stings of Conſcience ſeverally ariſe; They are the

the Sanctions, as it were, and Enforce- SERM.
ments of that eternal Law of Good IV.
and Evil, to which we are ſubjected; the natural Rewards and Puniſhments originally annexed to the Obſervance, or Breach of that Law by the great Promulger of it; and which being thus *joined* and twiſted *together* by *God*, can ſcarce, by any Arts, Endeavours, or Practices of *Men*, be *put aſunder*. The Prophet, therefore, explains *Good* and *Evil*, by *Sweet* and *Bitter*. *Woe be to* Iſa. v. 20.
them (ſays he) *that call Evil Good, and Good Evil! that put Bitter for Sweet, and Sweet for Bitter!* Implying, that the former of theſe do as naturally and ſenſibly affect the Soul, as the latter do the Palate; and leave as grateful, or diſpleaſing a Reliſh behind them. But,

3. There is no need of *Arguments*, to evince this Truth; the univerſal *Experience* and *Feeling* of Mankind bears Witneſs to it. For ſay, did ever any of you break the Power of a darling Luſt, reſiſt a preſſing Temptation,

SERM. IV. or perform any Act of a conſpicuous and diſtinguiſhing Virtue, but that you found it ſoon turn to account to you? Did not your Minds ſwell with a ſecret Satisfaction, at the Moment when you were doing it? And was not a Reflexion upon it afterwards always ſweet and refreſhing? *Health to your Navel, and Marrow to your Bones?* On the contrary, did you ever indulge a Criminal Appetite, or allow yourſelf ſedately in any Practice which you knew to be unlawful, but that you felt an inward ſtruggle, and ſtrong Reluctances of Mind before the Attempt, and bitter Pangs of Remorſe attending it? Though no Eye ſaw what you did, and you were ſure that no Mortal could diſcover it; did not Shame and Confuſion ſecretly lay hold of you? Was not your own *Conſcience* inſtead of a thouſand Witneſſes to you? Did it not *plead with you Face to Face*, as it were, and upbraid you with your Backſlidings? Have not ſome of you, perhaps, at this Inſtant, a ſenſible Experience

Prov. iii. 8.

Ezek. xx. 35.

perience of the Truth which I am preſ- SERM.
ſing upon you? Do you not feel the IV.
Operation of that powerful Principle, of which I am diſcourſing? Is not the Memory of ſome of your paſt Sins even now preſent to you? And are not your Minds ſtung with ſome Degree of that Regret and Uneaſineſs, which followed upon the firſt Commiſſion of them; And do you not diſcover what paſſes within you, by a more than ordinary Attention, Serioufneſs, and Silence; and even by an Endeavour to throw off theſe viſible Marks of Concern, into which you are ſurpriſed, as ſoon as they are obſerved?

The jolly and voluptuous Livers, the Men who ſet up for Freedom of Thought, and for diſengaging themſelves from the Prejudices of Education and ſuperſtitious Opinions, may pretend to diſpute this Truth, and perhaps, in the Gaiety of their Hearts, may venture even to deride it: But they cannot, however, get rid of their inward Convictions of it; they muſt feel it ſome-

67056

SERM. IV. times, though they will not own it. There is no poſſibility of reaſoning ourſelves out of our own Experience, or of laughing down a Principle woven ſo cloſely into the Make and Frame of our Natures. Notwithſtanding our Endeavours to conceal and ſtifle it, it will break out ſometimes, and diſcover itſelf to a careful Obſerver, through all our Pretences and Diſguiſes; for even *in the midſt of* ſuch *a Laughter, the Heart is ſorrowful:* and as the Beginning of that *Mirth* was Folly, ſo the End of it is always *Heavineſs*.

Prov. xiii. 14.

Look upon one of theſe Men, who would be thought to have made his ill Practices and ill Principles perfectly conſiſtent; to have ſhaken off all Regard to the Dictates of his own Mind concerning Good and Evil, and to have gotten above the Reproofs of his Conſcience; and you will find a thouſand Things, in his Actions and Diſcourſes, teſtifying againſt him, that *he deceiveth himſelf*, and that *the Truth is not in him*.

John i. 8.

him. If he be indeed, as he pretends, at eaſe in his Enjoyments, from whence come thoſe Diſorders and Unevenneſs in his Life and Conduct; thoſe Viciſſitudes of good and bad Humour, Mirth and Thoughtfulneſs; that perpetual Purſuit of little, mean, inſipid Amuſements; that reſtleſs Deſire of changing the Scene, and the Objects of his Pleaſures; thoſe ſudden Eruptions of Paſſion and Rage upon the leaſt Diſappointments; Certainly, all is not right within; or elſe there would be a greater Calm, and Serenity without: If his Mind were not in an unnatural Situation, and under contrary Influences, it would not be thus toſſed and diſquieted; For what Reaſon doth he contrive for himſelf ſuch a Chain and Succeſſion of Entertainments; and take care to be delivered over from one Folly, one Diverſion, to another, without Intermiſſion? Why, but becauſe he dreads to leave any void Spaces of Life unfilled, leſt *Conſcience* ſhould find Work for his Mind at thoſe Intervals? SERM. IV.

SERM. IV.

He hath no way to fence againſt guilty Reflexions, but by ſtopping up all the Avenues at which they might enter. Hence, his ſtrong Addiction to Company, his Averſion to Darkneſs and Solitude; which recollect the Thoughts, and turn the Mind inward upon itſelf, by ſhutting out external Objects and Impreſſions. It is not, becauſe the Pleaſures of Society are always new and grateful to him, that he purſues them thus keenly; for they ſoon loſe their Reliſh, and grow flat and inſipid, by Repetition. They are not his Choice, but his Refuge; for the Truth is, he dares not long converſe with himſelf, and with his own Thoughts; and the worſt Company in the World is better to him, than that of a *reproving Conſcience.*

A lively and late Proof of this we had in a certain Writer, who ſet up for delivering Men from theſe vain fantaſtic Terrors; and was, on that Account, for a Seaſon, much read and applauded. But it is plain, that he could

could not work that Effect in *himſelf*, SERM. which he pretended to work in *others*: IV. For his Books manifeſtly ſhew, that his Mind was over-run with gloomy and terrible Ideas of Dominion and Power; and that he wrote in a perpetual Fright againſt thoſe very Principles, which he pretended to contradict and deride: And ſuch as knew his Converſation well, have aſſured us, that nothing was ſo dreadful to him, as to be in the Dark, and to give his natural Fears an Opportunity of recoiling upon him. That he was timorous to an Exceſs, is certain; he himſelf owns it, in the Account which he wrote of himſelf, and which is in every one's Hands: But he did not care to own the true Reaſon of it, and therefore lays it upon a mighty Fright, which ſeized his Mother, when the *Spaniards* attempted their famous Invaſion, in the Year 1588, the Year in which he was born. The more probable Account of it is, that it naturally ſprung from his own Conduct and

SERM. IV.

Method of thinking. He had been endeavouring all his Life-time, to get rid of thoſe Religious Principles, under which he was carefully educated by his Father (a Divine of the Church of *England*) and to ſet up for a new Syſtem and Sect, which was to be built upon the Ruins of all thoſe Truths, that were then, and had ever been held ſacred by the beſt and wiſeſt of Men. It was Vanity puſhed him on to this Attempt, but he could not compaſs it. He was able, here and there, to delude a ſuperficial Thinker with his new Terms and Reaſonings: But the hardeſt Taſk of all was, thoroughly to deceive himſelf. His *Underſtanding* could not be completely impoſed upon, even by its own Artifices; and his *Conſcience*, every now and then, got the better of him in the Struggle; ſo he lived in a perpetual Suſpicion and Dread of the Reality of thoſe Truths, which he repreſented as Figments; and, while he made Sport with that *Kingdom of Darkneſs* (as he loved to call another World)

World) trembled, in good earneſt, at the Thought of it. SERM. IV.

Tiberius, that complete Pattern of Wickedneſs and Tyranny, had taken as much Pains to conquer theſe Fears as any Man, and had as many Helps and Advantages towards it, from great Splendour and Power, and a perpetual Succeſſion of a new Buſineſs, and new Pleaſures; and yet, as great a Maſter of the Art of Diſſimulation as he was, he could not diſſemble the inward Senſe of his Guilt, nor prevent the open Eruptions of it upon very improper Occaſions. Witneſs that *Letter*, which he wrote to the Senate from his impure Retreatment at *Capreæ*. *Tacitus* has preſerved the firſt Lines of it; and there cannot be a livelier Image of a Mind filled with wild Deſtraction and Deſpair, than what they afford us: *Quid ſcribam Vobis, P. C. aut quomodo ſcribam, aut quid omnino non ſcribam hoc tempore, Dii me Deæque pejus perdant, quàm perire quotidie ſentio, ſi ſcio!* That is, "What, or how, at this "Time,

SERM. IV. "Time, I ſhall write to you, Fathers "of the Senate, or what indeed I ſhall "not write to you, may all the Pow- "ers of Heaven confound me yet worſe "than they have already done, if I "know, or can imagine!" And *his* Obſervation upon it is well worthy of *ours*, and very appoſite to our preſent purpoſe: "In this manner (ſays he) "was this Emperor puniſhed by a Re- "flexion on his own infamous Life "and Guilt; nor was it in vain that "the greateſt Maſter of Wiſdom (he "means *Plato)* affirmed, that were "the Breaſt of Tyrants once laid open "to our View, we ſhould ſee there "nothing but ghaſtly Wounds and "Bruiſes; the Conſciouſneſs of their "own cruelty, Lewdneſs, and ill Con- "duct, leaving as deep and Bloody "Prints on their Minds, as the Strokes "of the Scourge do on the Back of "a Slave. *Tiberius* (adds he) con- "feſſed as much, when he uttered theſe "Words; nor could his high Stati- "on, or even Privacy and Retirement "itſelf,

" itſelf, hinder him from diſcovering SERM.
" to all the World the inward Ago- IV.
" nies and Torments, under which he
" laboured." Thus that excellent Hiſtorian *.

Believe it, the Tales of Ghoſts and Spectres were not (as is commonly ſaid) the mere Inventions of deſigning Men to keep weak Minds in Awe; nor the Products only of a religious Fear, degenerated into Melancholy and Superſtition; but wicked Men, haunted with a Senſe of their own Guilt (as the cruel Tetrarch here in the Text, with the Baptiſt's Murder) were uſed to affright themſelves with ſuch Phantoms as theſe, and often miſtook ſtrong and terrible Imaginations for real Apparitions. Thus I am ſure, the Author of the Book of *Wiſdom* very naturally accounts for them in his 17th Chapter; out of which I ſhall recite a large Paſſage, very appoſite to the Point which

* About this Paſſage of *Tiberius*, ſee *Hooker's* excellent Reflexions, p. 367, 368.

we

SERM. IV. we are now handling. He is there, with great Elegance, deſcribing that panic Fear, which ſeized the impious *Ægyptians*, when (as he ſpeaks) *they were fettered with the Bonds of a long Night, and ſhut up in their Houſes, the Priſoners of Darkneſs. Then*, ſays he, *they who had ſuppoſed that they lay hid in their ſecret Sins, were horribly aſtoniſhed and troubled with ſtrange Sights. For neither might the Corner that held them, keep them from Fear; but Noiſes, as of Waters falling down, ſounded about them, and ſad Viſions appeared unto them with heavy Countenances. And they that promiſed to drive away Terrors and Troubles from a ſick Soul* (the Men, we may ſuppoſe, who ſet up for confounding the Notions of Good and Evil, and ridiculing *Conſcience*) *were ſick themſelves of Fear worthy to be laughed at. For though no terrible Thing did affright them, yet being ſcared by Beaſts that paſſed by, and Hiſſing of Serpents, they died for Fear, refuſing to look upon the Air, which*

no Side could be avoided. For Wickedneſs (as he concludes) *condemned by its own Witneſs, is very timerous; and, being preſſed with Conſcience, always forecaſteth grievous Things!* SERM. IV.

I know it will be ſaid, that though this be *often*, yet it is not *always* the Caſe; ſince we have now and then Inſtances of Men, who lead very flagitious Lives, and yet feel not any of theſe Qualms or Guirds of *Conſcience*; but do, in all appearance, *live* eaſily, and ſometimes even *die* calmly. Which could not be (ſay the Objectors) if the Principle of *Conſcience*, and the condemning Power of it, were *natural* to Man; for it would then act like other natural Principles, univerſally, and without Exception. Having hitherto therefore illuſtrated this Truth by Obſervations drawn from *Scripture*, *Reaſon*, and *Experience*; I now proceed on my

Second general Head, To account for *this* Difficulty, which attends the Proof of it. In order to it, II.

1. I ob-

SERM. IV.

1. I obſerve, that we are deceived often in the Judgments we paſs on ſuch Occaſions. In our common Intercourſe with the World, we ſee only the *Outſide* and Surface, as it were, of Mens Actions, but cannot tell how it is with them *Inwardly*, and at the Bottom. We frame our Opinions of them from what paſſes in Converſation and public Places, where they may be upon their Guard, acting a Part, and ſtudying Appearances. The Hypocrite in Perfection will put on the Maſk ſo artificially, that it ſhall ſeem to be real and natural. Decency, and a Deſire of Eſteem ſhall enable Men to cover great Paſſions and Frailties, which, nevertheleſs, ſit very cloſe to them, and, as ſoon as thoſe Reſtraints are taken off, break out with Freedom. We have read of thoſe, who have been endued with ſuch a Conſtancy and Firmneſs of Temper, as even to endure the Rack, and to appear compoſed under the Pains of it, without owning their Crime, or declaring their Accomplices.

plices. And in like manner, the Tor- SERM.
ments of a guilty *Conſcience* may ſome- IV.
times be borne and diſſembled. I ob-
ſerve,

2. That the Diſorders and Repre-
henſions of *Conſcience* are not a *conti-*
nued, but an *intermitting* Diſeaſe; re-
turning upon the Mind by Fits, and
at particular Seaſons only; in the In-
tervals of which the Patient ſhall have
ſeeming Health, and real Eaſe. The
Eruptions of burning Mountains are
not *perpetual*, nor doth even the Smoak
itſelf aſcend *always* from the Tops of
them; but though the Seeds of Fire
lodged in their Caverns may be ſtifled
and ſuppreſſed for a Time, yet anon
they gather Strength, and break out
again, with a Rage great in Proportion
to its Diſcontinuance. 'Tis by Acci-
dents and Occaſions chiefly that the
Power of this Principle is called forth
into Act; by a ſudden ill Turn of
Fortune, or a Fit of Sickneſs, or our
Obſervation of ſome remarkable In-
ſtance of divine Vengeance, which hath

SERM. IV.

overtaken other Men in like Caſes. Even *Herod* was not always under the Paroxyſm deſcribed in the Text, but ſurprized into it unawares, by his *hearing of the Fame of Jeſus*; and then his Heart ſmote him at the Remembrance of the inhuman Treatment he had given to ſuch another Juſt and good Perſon, and filled his Mind anew with forgotten Horrors. We cannot therefore, from a preſent Calm of Thought, know, either how it *hath* been with a Man heretofore, or how it *ſhall* be with him hereafter; but *may* eaſily in ſuch Caſes, and *do* often judge *wrong* Judgment; ſaying, *Peace, Peace, where there is no Peace*, but a *Truce* only; and where it will appear, that there *was* none, whenever Affliction ruffles a Man's Soul, or a Death-bed rouzes him:

Veræ tum voces pectore ab imo
Erumpunt, atque eripitur perſona, manet res:

Then (and ſometimes *not till then*) all Maſks and Diſguiſes are thrown off, and the Mind appears naked and unguarded to itſelf and others.

Aſk

Aſk thoſe who attend the Sick, and help to prepare them for their Paſſage into another World; aſk them, I ſay, and they will tell you, how many Inſtances they have met with of Men, who ſeem to have been given up to a Spirit of Inſenſibility and Slumber, and have accordingly *ſlept* on for a long time, and *taken their Reſt*; and yet have in their laſt Moments been all at once ſufficiently awakened: What inexpreſſible Agonies and Horrors they have found upon the Minds of dying deſpairing Sinners, who thought themſelves ſecure againſt ſuch Attacks, and believed that the clamorous Principle within them was wholly ſilenced; but upon the *near* Proſpect of another World, and which made no Impreſſion on them at a *Diſtance*, have changed their Sentiments, and dropped their falſe Confidence; have ſeen their Guilt, and dreaded their Danger, when it was too late perhaps to think of deploring the one, or eſcaping the other. SERM. IV.

After all, it muſt be owned,

SERM. IV.

3. That there are now and then *Inſtances* of Men, who have gone through even this *laſt* Tryal unſhaken; and, after leading very diſſolute *Lives*, have yet *died hard*, as the Phraſe is, without any ſeeming Concern for what was paſſed, or Dread of what was to follow. Whenever ſuch an *Effect* happens, it is owing to one or more of theſe *Cauſes*; either to ill *Principles* early and deeply imbibed, or to a certain Obſtinacy and Sullenneſs of *Temper* peculiar to ſome Men; or laſtly, either to a natural or acquired *Stupidity*. If a Man begins *betimes* with himſelf, and takes *Pains* to vitiate his Mind with lewd Principles, and lives *long* in the Profeſſion of them, he may at laſt root and rivet them ſo faſt, till ſcarce any Application whatſoever is able to looſen them; and till the natural Sentiments of his *Conſcience* are even choaked and ſtifled by the Means of them.

A falſe Firmneſs and Reſolution join'd with a Shame of unſaying

doing all a Man hath ſaid and done be- SERM.
fore, may poſſibly carry him headlong IV.
on to his Death, without *owning*, or
perhaps even *ſeeing* his Danger. Groſs
and heavy Minds, unimproved by E-
ducation and Inſtruction, have at length
arrived at ſuch a Degree of *Stupidity*,
as to think of nothing *beyond* this
World, nor of any Thing *in* it, but
what immediately affects their *Senſes*.
And even Spirits more refined may,
by a perpetual and total Immerſion in
bodily Pleaſures, arrive at laſt at the
ſame Degree of *Inſenſibility*. In ſuch
Caſes and by the Help of ſuch Qua-
lities as theſe, it is *poſſible*, I grant,
and *ſometimes* happens, that Men have
gone *out* of the World, as they lived
in it, defying *Conſcience*, and the Power
of it, and deriding the Flames of *Hell*,
'till they were in the Midſt of them.
But theſe are *rare* Inſtances, and of no
Force therefore, when oppoſed to the
general Conviction and Feeling of Man-
kind upon the ſame Occaſions. They
prove only that there are Monſters in

SERM. IV. the *Moral*, as well as the *Natural* World, which make nothing againſt the ſettled Laws, and regular Courſe of either. To argue againſt the innate and pungent Reflections of *Conſcience* from ſome Mens want of them, is, as if one ſhould attempt to prove, that *Man* is not a *reaſonable* Creature, becauſe ſome Men are born *Naturals*, and *others* by too great an Intention of Thought, or by brutal Exceſſes, have loſt the *Uſe* of their *Reaſon*. For if the Light of *Reaſon* may itſelf be extinguiſhed, much more may the Voice of *Conſcience* be drowned; which being a practical Principle, is perpetually warred upon by our Luſts, and Paſſions, and ſinful Habits; whereas the other being a more ſpeculative Power, hath no Contrary in the Mind of Man to ſtruggle with.

But I forbear, ſince there remains yet the

III. *Third* and laſt Part of my [illegible] To apply what hath been ſaid [illegible] proper

proper Object of *All* our Admonitions from the Pulpit (and particularly of *This*) the *Hearts* and *Conſciences* of the Hearers. SERM. IV.

Since therefore the wiſe Author of our Natures hath ſo contrived them, that Guilt is naturally, and almoſt neceſſarily attended with Trouble and Uneaſineſs, let us even from hence be perſuaded to preſerve the Purity, that we may preſerve the Peace and Tranquillity of our Minds. For *Pleaſure's* Sake, let us abſtain from all *criminal* Pleaſures and Pollutions; becauſe the racking Pains of Guilt, duly awakened, are really an Overbalance to the greateſt ſenſual Gratifications. The Charms of Vice (how tempting ſoever they may ſeem to be) are by no Means equivalent to the inward Remorſe and Trouble, and the Tormenting Reflections which attend it; which always keep Pace with our Guilt, and are proportioned to the Greatneſs and Daringneſs of our Crimes: For *mighty Sinners* here as well as hereafter) *ſhall be mightily* Wiſd. vi. 6.

SERM. IV. *mightily tormented.* Sins of Omiſſion, Infirmity, and Surprize there will be; even the juſt Man falls *ſeven Times a Day* by them, and riſes again from them with Strength and Chearfulneſs to his Duty; but let us be ſure carefully to guard againſt all ſuch *flagrant* Enormities, as do *Violence* to the firſt and plaineſt Dictates of our *Reaſon*, and *overbear* the ſtrongeſt Impulſes of our *Conſcience*; for theſe will certainly leave a Wound behind them, which we ſhall find it hard to bear, and harder, much harder to cure. Let no Temptation, no Intereſt, no Influence whatſoever ſway us to do any Thing contrary to the Suggeſtions of *Conſcience* in plain Caſes, and Points of Moment; let us no more dare to do in private what that tells us ought not to be done, than if we were upon an open Theatre, and the Eyes of the whole Creation were upon us. What ſignifies it that we eſcape the View and Obſervation of Men, when the watchful Witness within ſees and records all our Faults, and will

will certainly one Day reprove us, and ſet our Miſdeeds in Order before us. SERM. IV.

It hath been reckoned a good Rule for an happy Conduct of Life, to be ſure of keeping our *domeſtic* Concerns right, and of being eaſy under our *own Roof*, where we may find an agreeable Retreat and Shelter from any Diſappointments we meet with in the great Scene of Vexation, the World. And the ſame Rule will, with greater Reaſon hold, in relation to the Peace of our *Conſcience*. Let our *firſt* Care be to keep all quiet and ſerene *there*: When this Point is once gained at Home, external Accidents will not be able deeply to affect us; and unleſs it be gained, all the Pleaſures, the Abundance and Pomp of Life will be inſipid and taſteleſs to us.

Wherefore let us reſolve all of us to ſtick to that Principle, which will keep us eaſy when we are alone, and will ſtick to us in an Hour when all outward Comforts fail us. Let thoſe of us particularly cheriſh it, who are in

SERM. IV. any Degree placed above the reſt of our Neighbours by a Superiority of Power, Riches, or any other outward Diſtinctions. Let thoſe chiefly liſten to *this* Reprover, who are otherwiſe ſet in great meaſure *above* Reproof. The more deſtitute they are of Advice and Correption from *others*, the more careful ſhould they be to attend to the Suggeſtions and Whiſpers of *this* inward Monitor and Friend. Though they value not the Cenſures paſſed by the *Vulgar* on their Actions, yet ſurely they cannot ſlight their *own*: Nor do they ſtoop *beneath* themſelves, when they ſtoop *to* themſelves only, and to the inward Dictates and Perſuaſions of their own Minds. The Marks of Diſtinction they bear, though they may enable them ſometimes to ſin with Impunity as to *Men*, yet will they not ſecure them againſt the Laſhes of an avenging *Conſcience*; which will [illegible] them out in their moſt ſecret Retirements, cannot be forbid Acc[illegible] diſmiſſed without being he[illegible]

make their Way to them, as they did to *Herod* and *Tiberius*, through Business or Pleasure, nay even through Guards and Crowds, and all the vain Forms and Ceremonies, with which they may be surrounded. SERM. IV.

In a Word; Let us *keep Innocency, and do the Thing which is right*; for whatever other Expedients towards Happiness Men may take up with, yet *that*, and that only, *will bring us Peace at the* Ps. xxxvii. 37.

St.

St. PAUL's *Defence before* FELIX:

A

SERMON

Preached at

St. JAMES's Chapel,

February 27, 1712-13.

ACTS xxiv. Part of Ver. 25.

And as He reaſoned of Righteouſneſs, Temperance, and Judgment to come, FELIX *trembled.*

WHO, that hears theſe Words, would not wiſh to have been preſent at this aſtoniſhing Scene; which repreſents the Apoſtle of the Gentiles, giving an Account of his Faith to *Felix*, the *Roman* Governor, in ſo moving

SERM V.

SERM. V. ing and convincing a manner, with ſuch a Force of Eloquence and Strength of Argument, that even he, before whom he ſtands capitally accuſed, is ſtruck, awed, confounded by his Diſcourſe, and the *Judge* himſelf quakes at the Voice of the *Priſoner! As he reaſoned of Righteouſneſs, Temperance, and Judgment to come* (ſays the Text) *Felix trembled.*

The Words will furniſh us with very Inſtructive and Uſeful Reflexions, if we take Occaſion from them diſtinctly to conſider,

I. *Firſt*, The *Subject* Matter of Saint *Paul's* Diſcourſe; *Righteouſneſs, Temperance, and Judgment to come.*

II. *Secondly*, His *Manner* of handling it; *he reaſoned.*

III. *Thirdly*, The remarkable *Effect*, that followed, upon his thus handling this important Subject; *Felix trembled.*

SERM. V.

Firſt, The *Subject* Matter of Saint *Paul's* Diſcourſe is ſaid to have been, *Righteouſneſs, Temperance, and Judgment to come.*

Not that we are to imagine, that the Apoſtle confined himſelf ſolely to the *three* Particulars here mentioned, without touching on any other Point of Chriſtian Doctrine: Doubtleſs he declared to *Felix* the *whole Counſel* of God in the Redemption of Man by *Chriſt Jeſus*; and inſiſted particularly on the great Article of *Chriſt's Reſurrection*, in this Sermon, as he did in many others: For the Words, immediately preceding thoſe of the Text, are, that *Felix ſent for Paul, and heard him concerning the Faith in Chriſt*; and therefore *all* the Articles of the *Chriſtian Faith* were, we may be ſure, ſufficiently explained by him. However, though many other Doctrines were at that Time handled by the Apoſtle, yet theſe of *Righteouſneſs, Temperance*, and *Judg-*

SERM. V. *Judgment to come*, had ſo large a Share in his Diſcourſe, were ſo warmly, ſo effectually urged by him, that St. [illegible] hath not thought fit to take Notice of any other Part of his Sermon. From whence we are naturally led to raiſe this plain, but profitable Obſervation, that the moral Duties we are to practiſe in *this* Life, and the Rewards or Puniſhments we are to expect in *another*, are the chief Conſiderations in Religion, which ſhould moſt often and earneſtly be inculcated by thoſe who *preach* the Goſpel, and be moſt attentively liſtened to, and weighed by thoſe who *hear* it.

Some Perſons have a Prejudice againſt what is, by way of Reproach, called *Moral Preaching*, and *Moral Arguing*; when the Nature of Good and Evil, Virtue and Vice are inſiſted on, and the ſeveral Conſequences diſplayed, which, by the Light of Reaſon, are known to attend them: This, they think, is not to preach *Jeſus Chriſt*, and his Goſpel; or is not to ſpeak ſpiritually, feelingly,

powerfully, to the Hearts and Con- SERM.
ſciences of Men. But St. *Paul*, it ſeems, V.
was not of this Mind, when he made
Juſtice, and *Temperance*, and a *future Account*, the chief Subject of his Sermon before *Felix*; when he argued (as his Manner of Preaching upon other Occaſions ſhews that he did) from Principles of Natural Light, how great Reaſon Men had to practiſe the two *firſt* of theſe, and to believe and expect the *latter*; when he enlarged upon the intrinſic Beauty and Lovelineſs of thoſe Virtues, and their manifeſt Subſerviency to Men's preſent and future Happineſs; and urged the univerſal Conſent of Mankind to this Purpoſe, who had always acknowledged themſelves to be under theſe Obligations, and, accordingly as they *did*, or did *not* fulfil them here, liable to be *rewarded*, or *puniſhed* hereafter. St. *Paul*, we may be ſure, thought himſelf all this while to be preaching *Jeſus Chriſt* and his Goſpel: And from the *Effect* we learn, that this *Moral* preaching of the Apoſtle was

SERM. V. ſufficiently powerful, awakening, edifying; for it had ſuch a Spiritual *Efficacy* in it, as to make his Auditor *tremble.*

But the *Subject* Matter of St. *Paul's* Diſcourſe is not more obſervable, on the Account of its *Excellence and Importance at large*, than it is, for the particular *Fitneſs and Propriety* of it, with Regard to the *Perſon* to whom it was addreſſed. The two Vices of which *Felix* was moſt remarkably guilty, were *Injuſtice* and *Intemperance*; as Hiſtorians of unſuſpected Credit, both Heathen and *Jewiſh*, inform us. *Tacitus* ſays of him, that, *Judææ impoſitus, et cuncta malefacta ſibi impune* [*ceſſura*] *ratus, tantâ potentiâ ſubnixo, per omnem ſævitiam ac libidinem jus regium ſervili ingenio exercuit:* i. e. The Impunity which he promiſed himſelf from his high Station and Power, tempted him to commit all manner of Luſt and Violence. And *Joſephus* adds, that *Druſilla* herſelf, who now ſat with him on the Judgment Seat, was really the

the Wife of a certain King of the *Eme-* SERM.
ſenes, but had been enticed from his V.
Bed by *Felix*, with whom ſhe now
publicly lived and converſed. Nothing therefore could be more *appoſite*, than a Diſcourſe concerning *Righteouſneſs* and *Temperance*, before *ſuch* a cruel and voluptuous Perſon; nothing more *proper*, than to put this unjuſt Judge in mind of *another*, a more impartial and dreadful *Tribunal*, before which *he* himſelf ſhould one Day ſtand, and be judged. Thus did St. *Paul* adapt and proportion what he ſpake to the peculiar Wants and Exigences of the Hearer; and in ſo doing, left us a Pattern worthy of Imitation; ſuch as, when attentively conſidered, will give us great Occaſion to admire the *Dexterity* and *Addreſs*, the *ſincere* and *diſintereſted Conduct*, the mighty *Courage* and *Zeal* of this Eminent Apoſtle.

What could have more of holy *Art* and *Wiſdom* in it, than St. *Paul's* anſwering the Enquiries of *Felix* in *ſuch* a Manner, as was moſt likely to benefit

SERM. V. the Enquirer? The *Roman* Governor, led by no other Principle than Curioſity, deſires from St. *Paul* an Account of his Faith: St. *Paul* readily complies, and ſo orders that Account, as to ſet *thoſe* Parts of Chriſtianity in the cleareſt Light before *Felix*, which he wanted moſt to ſee and conſider; *ſo* as to turn off his *general* Apology for the Goſpel into an immediate and cloſe Application of ſome of its chief Doctrines to the *particular* Caſe of *Felix*; and to ſhew him, ere he is aware, that the Laws both of Chriſtianity and Nature agree, in condemning his Violences and Impurities.

What a *ſincere* and *diſintereſted* Spirit does there appear in St. *Paul* on this Occaſion! He ſtood there accuſed of heinous Crimes, and was ready to ſink under the Malice and mighty Power of his Accuſers, the High Prieſt, and chief Men of the *Jewiſh* Sanhedrim then preſent, and ſoliciting a ſevere Sentence againſt him. And *yet* he ſeems regardleſs of the imminent Peril.

he

he was in; and, forgetting his own pri- SERM.
vate Intereſt, any Degree of Concern V.
for himſelf, turns all his Thoughts, and bends his whole Force towards promoting the general Intereſt of the Goſpel, and the Salvation of Souls. He contrives not how he may gain the *Affections* of his Judge, and make him favourable to his Cauſe; but how only he may induce him to be kind to himſelf, and a good *Chriſtian*; how he may render him fit to receive Mercy and Favour from the ſupreme Judge of Heaven and Earth. What is, if this be not to preach the Goſpel of *Chriſt in Simplicity and godly Sincerity?*

Laſtly, we may obſerve alſo, in the Behaviour of St. *Paul*, the Marks of an *Undaunted* and *Exemplary Courage.* He fears not, we ſee, to utter neceſſary, though harſh and ungrateful Truths in the Ears of one, who had the Power of Life and Death over him. He knew, with what Dangers the faithful Diſcharge of his Duty would, in

SERM. V. this Caſe, be attended, how impatient the Great are, under a Reproof, though couched in the moſt gentle and leaſt offenſive Language: what abſolute Empire *Druſilla* had gained over the Heart of *Felix*, and with what Revengefulneſs that impure Woman would be ſure to purſue any one, who ſhould venture to repreſent his Guilt to him, and to rouze his ſleeping Conſcience: And *yet* none of theſe frightening Conſiderations were able to repreſs his Godly Zeal, or to check his Freedom; which he conducted indeed, with great Caution and Prudence, inſinuating his Reproofs under the Cover of ſome Evangelical Doctrines, then propoſed by him: However, with ſo great Force and Succeſs, as to ſtrike Confuſion and Terror into the Perſon, for whom they were intended.

Let us coppy the excellent Pattern which this Apoſtle hath ſet us, by taking all proper Opportunities of ſpreading the Kingdom of *Chriſt* in the Hearts of Men, and of advancing the Intereſts

Intereſts of his Goſpel. Let us reſolve always to do our Duty, and diſcharge a good Conſcience faithfully, without being deterred by *poſſible* Inconveniences, or Dangers that *may* attend us for ſo doing; without ſuffering *ſecular* Views, and our own *private* Intereſts to divert us from purſuing any good Deſign, whereby we may reaſonably hope to promote the Divine Glory, and the Good of Mankind. Let us act in ſuch Caſes diſcreetly indeed, warily, wiſely; but withal couragiouſly, zealouſly, firmly, as diſregarding the Fear of *Man*, when it comes in Competition with the Fear of *God*. Theſe (I ſay) are the Intimations, theſe the Inſtructions given us by the Behaviour of St. *Paul*; when, before an oppreſſive, a diſſolute, and an unbelieving Magiſtrate, he took an Occaſion to Diſcourſe of *Righteouſneſs, Temperance, and Judgment to come.* SERM. V.

In which Diſcourſe of his,

SERM. V. The *Secoud* Thing obſervable is, his *Manner* of handling theſe Subjects; *he Reaſoned:* that is, he treated of them in a *Rational* Way; proving from the Nature and Tendency of thoſe Virtues our Obligation to practiſe them; and inferring from thoſe Obligations the Certainty and Neceſſity of a future Account, wherein Notice ſhould be taken how we have, or have not complied with them; and we ſhould be rewarded or puniſhed accordingly. And can any thing be ſaid more to the Advantage of a *Rational* Way of evincing the Doctrines of *Morality*, and the Truths of the *Goſpel*, than that St. *Paul* practiſed it? He practiſed it, not on *this* only, but on many *other* Occaſions: In his ſeveral Apologies for himſelf and for his Goſpel, recorded in the *Acts*, throughout his Epiſtles ſent to the ſeveral Churches he planted, we find this great Apoſtle of the *Gentiles* continually *Reaſoning*; not merely propoſing Doctrines in an *Antho-*

Authoritative Manner, by Virtue of his Apoſtleſhip and Commiſſion from God, but proving and making good what he propoſes by *Inference* and *Argument.* Thus he frequently did, and by ſo doing has ſanctified *Reaſon* to the Purpoſes of *Religion*, and ſhewed us that *one* Sort (indeed the *beſt* Sort) of *good Preaching*, conſiſts in *good Arguing.* SERM. V.

Some pious and well-meaning *Chriſtians* have a very wrong Notion concerning *edifying* Diſcourſes, and profiting by Sermons. They reliſh nothing from the Pulpit, but what is addreſſed to their *Paſſions*, and ſet out with all the Advantages of a popular Eloquence, and moving Delivery. By this Means they find themſelves *inwardly* affected and warmed; and that heating of their *Fancy* they eſteem and call *Spiritual Edification.* But when any Point of Doctrine is handled in a Cloſe and Argumentative Manner, it appears flat and unſavory to them, has nothing in it of the

SERM. V. the Life and *Power of Godlineſs*, and is all mere *human Reaſoning*. But herein they are widely miſtaken; for it is a far greater and more uſeful Work, to inform the *Underſtandings*, and convince the *Judgments* of Men, than to raiſe their *Paſſions*; and that Diſcourſe, which is moſt *Inſtructive*, and beſt ſupported by *Reaſon*, is certainly, if Men attend to it as they ought, moſt *Edifying* too. A Vehement and Voluble *Tongue*, a languiſhing *Tone* of Voice, a pious Set of *Phraſes*, or the like, will very powerfully move the *Affections* of ſome Sort of Hearers; but the Warmth by that Means raiſed, is monentary, and vaniſhing, without any true, ſound, laſting, ſpiritual *Improvement*. To compaſs that, the Way, we find, which the mighty and ſucceſsful Preacher St. *Paul* took, was, to *Reaſon*. Though he were *Divinely* Inſpired, and ſpake therefore, as the *Oracles of God*, with an uncontroulable *Authority*; tho' he were endued with Supernatural Powers, and could therefore have confirmed

firmed the Truth of what he uttered by *Miracles*; yet in Compliance with the Way in which Human Nature, and Reaſonable Creatures are uſually wrought upon, he *Reaſoned.* But theſe Reflexions have been, in ſome Degree, anticipated; and therefore, without enlarging further upon them, I haſten to conſider the SERM. V.

Third and *laſt* Thing obſervable in the Text, the wonderful *Effect* that followed upon St. *Paul's* thus *Reaſoning* on theſe important Subjects, *Felix trembled.* His Mind was filled with Horror, at the Remembrance of his *paſt* Crimes, and the Apprehenſion of a *future* Reckoning; and theſe *inward* Fears and Forbodings appeared in the *outward* and viſible Marks of a great Conſternation. III.

Though *he* was one of the mightieſt Men on Earth, and *Paul*, a poor deſpiſed Priſoner; though he was then ſitting on the Seat of Judgment, where it behoved him to do nothing that

SERM. V. miſbecame his high Place and Character; yet could he not diſſemble the Pangs and Agonies of his uneaſy Mind, *he trembled!*

From whence it is natural to obſerve the great Force and Efficacy of the Word of God, duly handled and applied: *It is* (according to the Account of it, given by this very Apoſtle in another Place) *quick and powerful, and ſharper than any two edged Sword, piercing even to the dividing aſunder of Soul and Spirit, and of the Joints and Marrow, and is a Diſcerner of the Thoughts and Intents of the Heart.* There is no *Sin* ſo ſecret, but that it will find it out and expoſe it; no *Heart* ſo hard, but that it can ſoften it; no *Conſcience* ſo far plunged in a lethargic Sleep, but that it is able to rouze it. Strange are the Inſtances of this Kind recorded in Holy Writ! *Our Lord* opens the Prophecies, and expounds the Scriptures concerning himſelf, to the *two Diſciples* travelling towards *Emmuas*; and, while he is doing

Heb. iv. 12.

Luke xxiv. 13.

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ing it, *their Hearts burn within them.* SERM. V.
Philip points out to the Eunuch the Meaning of a Chapter in *Iſaias*; immediately Light and Conviction ruſh into his Mind; he confeſſes *Jeſus*, and demands Baptiſm. St. *Peter* preaches the Goſpel to a great Multitude of the *Jews*, who had juſt before been inſtrumental in the Crucifixion of *Chriſt*: They no ſooner hear him, than they are *pricked to the Heart*, and cry out, *Men and Brethren, what ſhall we do?* and ſtraitway there are *added to the Faith* no leſs than Three Thouſand *Souls* by this ſingle Sermon. And here in the Text, while St. *Paul is reaſoning of Righteouſneſs, Temperance, and Judgment to come*, Felix *trembles*. Such is the wonderful Power of Truth, when particularly bleſſed by the God of Truth, and bid to go forth and proſper! Such is the great and aſtoniſhing Influence of the Word of God, when aſſiſted and enlivened by his Spirit! It prevails over all Difficulties, all Oppoſition, and is *mighty*

Acts viii. 35.

Acts ii. 37.

Acts ii. 41.

2 Cor. x. 4.

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SERM. V. *to the pulling down of ſtrong Holds.* Remarkable to this Effect is the different Succeſs of *Tertullus's* and St. *Paul's* Pleading. *Tertullus*, we may preſume, was one of the moſt famous Pleaders of his Time; elſe the High Prieſt and Elders, in the Cauſe of ſuch Conſequence (which they themſelves went from *Jeruſalem* to *Cæſarea* on Purpoſe to proſecute) would not have pitched upon him for their Advocate. And yet this great *Orator*, with all his ſtudied Art and Eloquence, made no Impreſſion on *Felix*; whereas St. *Paul's* Speech ſoon afterwards moved, terrified, confounded him. The Reaſon of which different Effect ſeems to have been, that the *one* was with good Words to varniſh over an ill Cauſe, and by the Power of Oratory to ſupport a falſe and lying Accuſation: Whereas the *other* had Right and Truth on his ſide, and therefore preſſed them earneſtly: He himſelf felt what he ſpake, had an inward and vital Senſe of thoſe Truths he delivered; and therefore

therefore he made others feel them too; he ſpake *from* his own Heart, and *to* the Hearts and Conſciences of thoſe that heard him; and *therefore* he prevailed. SERM. V.

How ſhould this Inſtance of the operative Virtue of *God's* Word reproach our Sluggiſhneſs and Inſenſibility? An impure and wicked *Heathen* (we hear) trembled at St. *Paul's* Doctrine. The *ſame Doctrine* ſounds every Day in the Ears of negligent *Chriſtians*, without terrifying, without alarming them. The *ſame Apoſtle* ſtill *reaſons* with them in his Epiſtles, *concerning Righteouſneſs, Temperance, and Judgment to come:* But he *reaſons* to no Purpoſe; his *Words ſeem to them as idle Tales*; they neither feel their *Force*, nor regard their *Meaning*. Surely for this *Felix* ſhall one Day riſe up in Judgment againſt them; for *he* heard and *trembled*.

I obſerve *(Secondly)* that though *Felix* ſhewed great Concern on that Occaſion, yet *Druſilla*, the Partner of his

SERM. V. his Crimes, did, for ought appears, ſit by altogether unmoved with the Apoſtle's Diſcourſe. The moſt probable Account of which ſeems to be this; that *ſhe*, being born and bred a *Jeweſs*, had better Opportunities of knowing the Will of God and her own Duty, and greater Obligations to practiſe what ſhe knew, than *thoſe* who were guided only by the Light of Nature and Reaſon. And yet, notwithſtanding the mighty Reſtraints which her Religion laid upon her, ſhe had forſaken her Marriage Vows, and gone from the Bed of her Huſband, who was circumciſed, into that of an uncircumciſed Heathen. For which Reaſon *her Guilt* was of a much deeper Dye than that of *Felix* was; and conſequently her Heart more obdurate; and inſenſible of Reproof. From whence we may raiſe to ourſelves this general and uſeful Reflexion; that the more Advantages any Man has towards diſcovering the Truth, and the more freely the Means of Grace have been

been indulged to him, the more deſperate in his Caſe, if he happens to revolt, and the harder will the Taſk be, if he turns profligate, to reclaim him. It is a Work of much leſs Difficulty to make a good *Chriſtian* of a profeſſed Heathen, than to bring an ill *Chriſtian*, who now lives like an Heathen, to a feeling Senſe of his Sins, and to any Degree of true Remorſe and Compunction of Heart for them. SERM. V.

Let us hear the Iſſue of the whole Matter—What the *Conſequences* of theſe Tremblings of *Felix* was, and how long they continued upon him, the Context will inform us. He abruptly breaks off the Diſcourſe with St. *Paul*, and diſmiſſes him in Haſte. *Go thy way* (ſays he) *for this Time, when I have a convenient Seaſon I will call for thee!* But he ſoon recovers from his Fright; for it preſently follows—*He hoped alſo, that Money ſhould have been given him of* Paul, *that he might looſe him; wherefore he ſent for him the oftner, and communed with him.* We ſee *the Seed* of the Word, ſown by

SERM. V. the Apoſtle, *fell among Thorns, and immediately the Thorns ſprung up, and choaked it:* The Love of unjuſt and oppreſſive Gain quickly returned upon *Felix*, and drove out the Impreſſions of St. *Paul's* Reaſonings; and when he had *once* ſtood the Shock of his Conſcience, and got the better of his Fears, he afterwards heard the *ſame Things* ſaid, without any Degree of the *ſame* Remorſe and Concern. *He ſent for St.* Paul *often and communed with him*, with no other Deſign but that of gratifying his Curioſity, and extorting a Bribe from him — So ſuddenly and eaſily may the beſt Reflexions be ſtifled, and the ſtrongeſt Convictions overborne by the Force of any one prevailing Vice, or Luſt, that hath gotten an abſolute Dominion over us!

Matt. xiii. 7.

That this may not be our Caſe, whenever we hear an awakening Diſcourſe from the Pulpit, and find our Conſciences touched to the Quick with ſome appoſite Paſſages of it; let us not forthwith endeavour to get rid of the Smart,

Smart, and to diſmiſs ſuch troubleſome SERM.
Reflexions, as *Felix* did; *Go your way* V.
for this time, when I have a convenient ——
Seaſon I will call for you. Nay, but *this* is the proper *Time*, *this* the moſt convenient *Seaſon* for our entertaining them, and converſing with them, when they preſs to be admitted, and heard. Take not therefore ſomething, as the Way is, to put off the Fit; call not in Company, Buſineſs, or Pleaſure to divert your Thoughts from their preſent melancholy Employment; but rather ſtudy every way to cheriſh and promote theſe good *Beginnings* by Retirement, Meditation, and Prayer! *Commune with your* Pſ. iv. 4
own Heart in your Chamber, and be ſtill there; ſuffer theſe *Terrors of the Lord* freely to reaſon and plead with you, *till* they have *perſuaded* you *there* in *private*; re-apply, and inforce, and improve thoſe good Impreſſions you received in *public*, till you have rivеted the Influence of them faſt into your Mind, and reached the End for which the good Spirit of God intended them; even till

SERM. V. (by the Means of them) you have wrought out a *Repentance to Salvation not to be repented of!*

2 Cor. vii. 10.

Which that all of us may attain, God of his infinite Mercy grant, through the Merits of Chriſt *our Saviour, to whom, with the Father and the bleſſed Spirit, be aſcribed all Power and Praiſe, now and for ever.*

Of

Of Glorying in the Croſs of CHRIST:

A

SERMON

Preached at

St. JAMES's Chapel,

On *Good-Friday*, 1718.

GAL. vi. 14.

But God forbid that I ſhould glory, ſave in the Croſs of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, *whereby the World is crucified unto me, and I unto the World.*

GOD *forbid!* A Manner of Speech familiar, and almoſt peculiar to St. *Paul*; frequently employed by him in his Writings, thrice in this very Epiſtle;

SERM. VI.

SERM. VI. Epiſtle; never, but where he intends, with a particular Degree of Earneſtneſs and Vehemence, to condemn ſome Doctrine or Practice imputed to *Chriſtians*, or prevailing among them; by which he thought Chriſtianity highly diſhonoured. In ſuch Caſes, it is uſual with him to expreſs his Diſlike, his Deteſtation of ſuch Doctrine or Practice, by this emphatical Phraſe, μὴ γένοιτο, which we tranſlate, *God forbid!*

The ſpecial Occaſion of his employing it here in the Text, was this: The *Gentile* Converts among the *Galatians*, after St. *Paul's* Departure from them, had been ſeduced by ſome falſe Teachers, who were *Jews*, into a Belief, that the *Law of Moſes* was not entirely aboliſhed, but that Circumciſion, and the other Rites of it, were ſtill neceſſary to be obſerved by all thoſe, who, being *Heathens*, intended to become *Chriſtians*. This Opinion had been entertained, and ſpread by theſe falſe Teachers, partly through a ſuperſtitious Reverence for their *Law*, and a miſtaken Notion of the true Nature

ture and Deſign of the *Goſpel*; and partly, with a View of leſſening the Prejudices, which the *Jews* had conceived againſt the Doctrine of *Chriſt*; and of avoiding the Perſecutions, which they every where raiſed againſt thoſe, who propagated, or profeſſed it. SERM. VI.

The Apoſtle having argued againſt theſe Teachers, and their Opinions, ſtrongly and fervently in various Parts of this Epiſtle, returns to the ſame Subject at the Cloſe of it; and there ſums up in ſhort, what he had before more largely delivered. *As many* (ſays he) *as deſire to make a fair ſhew in the Fleſh* [Εὐπροσωπῆσαι ἐν σαρκὶ, a Phraſe of his own, which ſignifies, to act upon carnal Views, and for worldly Ends, and to ſtudy popular and plauſible Appearances] *they conſtrain you to be circumciſed, only leſt they ſhould ſuffer Perſecution for the Croſs of* Chriſt. [Not ſo much out of a Conviction of the Neceſſity of what they urge upon you, as that they may live eaſily, and carry Things ſmoothly with all Men.] For, as it follows,

SERM. VI. *neither They* [these false Teachers] *themselves, who are Circumcised, keep the Law; but desire to have you Circumcised.* To what End? Even *that they may glory in your Flesh*; that they may boast of having made you Proselytes to *Judaism*, in the Way to *Christianity*, and by that Means recommend themselves to their Countrymen, on the Account of their Zeal for the *Law of Moses*, at the same Time that they would be thought to serve the Interests of the Gospel. *But* let them consult their own Safety, and affect a false Glory by this insincere Conduct, if they please; *God forbid* (says he) *that I should glory, save in the Cross of our Lord* Jesus Christ! God forbid, that I should act upon any such *worldly* Views and Motives in the Propagation of the Doctrine of *Christ*, or think to promote it by *any* Methods, but what are agreeable to the Nature and Design of it: It is the Doctrine of the Cross, and ought therefore to be preached in Simplicity and godly Sincerity, without worldly Hopes or Fears, without Arts and Disguises;

guiſes: The chief Article of this Doc- SERM.
trine, that wherein the great Lines of it VI.
center, is, the Satisfaction made to Di-
vine Juſtice, by the Sufferings and Death
of a Crucified Saviour. By this Sacrifice
of the Croſs all the legal Sacrifices and
Ceremonies are determined and aboliſh-
ed; by this, and this only, a real Atone-
ment is made to God for our Sins, and a
Way opened to his Favour: On this,
conſequently, all the Hopes and Happi-
neſs of a *Chriſtian* depend. Mean there-
fore and ignominious as the Circum-
ſtances of this Tranſaction were, I will
not be offended at them myſelf, nor fear
leſt others ſhould be offended: On this
Subject I will perpetually dwell in my
private Meditations, and in my public
Inſtructions: Of this Capital Article of
the Chriſtian Faith I will not only not
be aſhamed, but I will boaſt; I will
glory in it, and in nothing beyond, or be-
ſides it: For it is a Doctrine full of
Wonder and Delight, of Inſtruction,
Advantage, and Comfort to ſincere Be-
lievers, to penitent Sinners; ſince it is
that,

SERM. VI. that, *whereby the World is Crucified unto me, and I unto the World. Whereby the World is Crucified unto me: All that is in the World, the Luſt of the Fleſh, the Luſt of the Eye, and the Pride of Life*, is rendered, though not incapable of *polluting* me, yet ineffectual towards *condemning* me; the Sting of Sin is taken away, the Guilt is pardoned; and *I am crucified unto the World*: I am, by the victorious Power of that Grace, which was purchaſed by this Sacrifice of the Croſs, become inſenſible, and dead, as it were, to the Pleaſures, the Pomps and Vanities of this World; I have *crucified the Fleſh, with the Affections and Luſts.* Since therefore the Sufferings of *Chriſt* are of ſo great Efficacy and Power, as to be able to free me, not only from the Guilt and Puniſhment of Sin, but alſo from the Dominion and Power of it; is there any Thing I ſhould value myſelf upon, in Compariſon of the Privilege of being made a Partaker of the Merits of theſe Sufferings? in Compariſon of the Mercies, the Advantages I enjoy, by the

Gal. v. 24.

Means

Means of this humble, but admirable Diſpenſation? Let others form to themſelves what Schemes of Satisfaction and Happineſs, pride themſelves in what Preeminences, what Diſtinctions they pleaſe; *But God forbid that I ſhould glory, ſave in the Croſs of our Lord* Jeſus Chriſt, *whereby the World is crucified unto me, and I unto the World!* SERM. VI.

I have largely explained the *Connection*, and thereby opened the *Meaning* of theſe Words of St. *Paul*: The *Uſe* I intend to make of them is, from thence to ſhew,

Firſt, That whatever Excellencies, outward Advantages, or Privileges, it may be our Lot to enjoy, yet it miſbecomes us, as we are *Chriſtians*, to *glory* in them: But that, I.

Secondly, It highly becomes us to *glory in the Croſs* of *Chriſt*. II.

Thirdly, By what *Methods*, and in Oppoſition to what Enemies of the Croſs of *Chriſt*, III.

SERM. VI. *Chriſt*, we are *obliged to glory* in it.— Of theſe *three* Points in their Order, as far as the Time will permit. And,

I. *Firſt*, I am to ſhew, That whatever Excellencies, outward Advantages, or Privileges it may be our Lot to enjoy, yet it miſbecomes us, as we are *Chriſtians*, to *glory* in them.

I do not ſay, that we are to be inſenſible of ſuch Advantages, to have no Reliſh of them, no Complacence in them; For neither Reaſon nor Religion require ſuch a Conduct from us. They are the good Things of Life, given us by the Author of all Good, on purpoſe that we ſhould, in due Meaſure and Seaſon, enjoy them; nor can they of themſelves, while our Appetites, and our Opinions concerning ſuch Things are well regulated, be hurtful to thoſe who poſſeſs them. They may be *uſed*, if they are not *over-valued*; if we do not ſuffer our Affections to cleave too cloſely to them, and our Minds to be in any degree elated, and ſwelled by a Reflexion upon them.

They

They may be a *Part*, a *ſmall* Part of our Happineſs in this tranſitory Scene of Life, provided we always retain in our Minds the Apoſtle's Directions concerning them, That they, *who have* theſe Things, *be as though they had them not*; *and they that rejoice, as though they rejoiced not*; *and they that buy, as though they poſſeſſed not*; *and they that uſe this World, as not abuſing it*; *for the Faſhion of this World paſſeth away:* Theſe worldly Advantages, theſe Honours, Profits, Pleaſures, whatever they be, are of uncertain Continuance, and may, in a little Time, ſlip away from us; to be ſure, we ſhall, in a little Time, ſlip away from them, and leave them behind us: And therefore, why ſhould we reſt in them? Why ſhould we boaſt of them? Why ſhould we feed and raiſe, not our Appetites and Luſts only, but our Vanity and Pride alſo, by the Means of them?

SERM. VI.

1 Cor. vii. 30, 31.

The Chriſtian Religion, by the Tendency of all its Doctrines (particularly that of *Chriſt* crucified) by the manner of its Progreſs, and the mean Characters

of

SERM. VI. of those who first promulged and embraced it, seems to have been so throughout contrived, as effectually to mortify, and beat down any undue Complacence we may have in ourselves on such Occasions. *Ye see your Calling, Brethren* (says St. *Paul* with that παῤῥησία, that becoming Freedom of Speech, in which he excels) *how that many wise Men after the Flesh, not many Mighty, not many Noble are called; but God hath chosen the foolish Things of the World to confound the Wise; and God hath chosen the weak Things of the World, to confound the Things which are mighty; and the base Things of the World, and the Things which are despised hath he chosen, yea, and the Things which are not, to bring to nought the Things that are.* And to what end did he thus order Matters in the Propagation of his Gospel? Even to this, (as it follows) *that no Flesh should glory in his Presence*, but, that *he who glorieth might glory in the Lord*; might value himself upon being a serious sincere *Christian*, and upon nothing besides it.

1 Cor. i. 26.

Indeed

umphs of the Croſs of *Chriſt*, muſt loſe all their Force and Influence, and grow flat and inſignificant in the Eyes of a good *Chriſtian*. Can we look up to him that was pierced, ſee him ſtretched on his Croſs, enduring the Pain, deſpiſing the Shame of it, and not look down with Neglect and Contempt on that Scene of Sin and Vanity which occaſioned thoſe Sufferings? Is it poſſible for us to *love the World, and the Things that are in the World*, while our Eyes are fixed on him, who *gave himſelf for our Sins, that he might deliver us from this preſent evil World*; that is, on purpoſe that he might free us from the enchanting Power of its empty Delights, and vain Allurements? Theſe he taught us, by his Doctrine and by his Practice, by his Life and by his Death, to undervalue; he choſe to be without them, and the Perfection of *his* Virtue conſiſted in overlooking and deſpiſing them. *We* therefore, who profeſs to be his Followers, muſt certainly degenerate very far from that Profeſſion,

SERM. VI.

1 John ii. 15.

Gal. i. 4.

SERM. VI. when we eagerly purſue, greedily enjoy, and highly admire them.

1 Cor. v. 6. Beloved, this *our glorying is not good*, But,

II. *Secondly*, It highly becomes us to *glory in the Croſs of* Chriſt, as I propoſed, in the ſecond Place to ſhew. For ſince by the alone Merits of his Croſs we gain all the Advantages of the Chriſtian Diſpenſation, are reconciled to God, and made capable of Heaven and Happineſs, we cannot but glory in that Croſs, if indeed we value ourſelves upon our being *Chriſtians*.

The Croſs of *Chriſt* is the Doctrine, to which all the other Doctrines of the Goſpel refer, and from which they derive all the Efficacy and Influence they have, towards purging our Conſciences from dead Works; and therefore in that ſingle Article they are often all of them ſummed up and compriſed.

1 Cor. i. 23. *We preach Chriſt crucified*, ſays St. *Paul*; as if that, and that alone were the Subject of all he wrote, and all

1 Cor. ii. 2. he ſpoke: And again, *I determined to know*

know nothing but Chriſt, and him cru- SERM.
cified; as if that were the great Point VI.
of ſaving *Knowledge*, to which thoſe
who *learn*, or who *teach* the Religion
of *Chriſt*, ſhould altogether apply themſelves. Can we look upon it, under *this* View, and refrain from *glorying* in it? To *this* Article of our Faith the Enemies of the Goſpel have always taken the greateſt Exceptions; and in *this* therefore we ought to triumph moſt, as being ſecure againſt their Attacks, and deſpiſing their vain Objections and Reaſonings. The firſt Preachers of our Faith muſt, in this Caſe, be our Patterns. They knew that *Chriſt* 1 Cor. i.
crucified was *to the Jews a Stumbling-* 23.
Block; but did they therefore diſſemble the Scandal of the Croſs for that very Reaſon? No! they boaſted of it, they inſiſted upon it in all their Applications to the unbelieving *Jews*, recorded in the *Acts*; particularly Saint Acts x. 39;
Peter omits no occaſion of mentioning to them Him *whom they ſlew, and hanged on a Tree*; as an high Reproach

SERM. VI. to his Murderers indeed, but none at all to his Diſciples and Followers.

Very fitly therefore has the Church of *England* appointed that, after we have been *received into the Congregation of Chriſt's Flock* by Baptiſm, we ſhould be *ſigned with the Sign of the Croſs, in token* (as ſhe ſpeaks) *that we ſhould not hereafter be aſhamed to confeſs the Faith of Chriſt crucified, but ſhould manfully fight under his Banner againſt Sin, the World, and the Devil, and continue Chriſt's faithful Soldiers and Servants to our Lives Ends.* A Ceremony, which, whatever Fault may have been found with it, is certainly very Ancient, very Innocent, and very Significant too; as it fitly admoniſhes us, throughout the whole Courſe of our Chriſtian Warfare, to look upon the Croſs of *Chriſt* as the proper Badge of our Profeſſion, which we ought not to be aſhamed, or afraid to own, whenever He, in whoſe Service we are liſted, ſhall call upon us to take it up, and follow

follow him. But to proceed, I am to ſhew, SERM. VI.

Thirdly, by what *Methods*, and in oppoſition to what Enemies of the Croſs of *Chriſt* we are *Obliged to Glory* in it. III.

1. Now the *firſt* Step requiſite towards our complying with this Obligation is, frequently to meditate on the Sufferings and Death of *Chriſt*. We glory in nothing but what we eſteem and value; and what we value much, we ſhall be apt often and attentively to conſider. We ſhould therefore revolve often in our Thoughts this *great Myſtery of Godlineſs, God manifeſt in the Fleſh, dying on the Croſs, to deſtroy the Works of the Devil:* We ſhould turn it on all Sides, and conſider it, as the proper Subject of our Awe and Wonder, our Joy and Pleaſure, our Gratitude and Love; 'till we have warmed our Hearts with a lively Senſe of the ineſtimable Benefits conferred on us by the Means of it. This the oftener we do, the better: But we cannot, with- 1 Tim. iii. 16.

SERM. VI. out inexcuſable Negligence, omit doing it on ſuch a Day as this, ſet apart by the Church on Purpoſe to commemorate the *Paſſion* of our Lord. If we fail to employ ſome Part of this Day in our Cloſets, and in devout Meditations on the Croſs of *Chriſt*, we are unworthy of that Redemption he purchaſed for us. *What* (ſaid our Saviour to his ſleeping Diſciples, when he was entering on his Agony) *can you not watch with me one Hour!* Can you not ſhake off your Drowſineſs, and bear me Company in my Sorrows for a few Moments, on ſo important and becoming an Occaſion? Can your ſluggiſh Inattention and Indifference to what concerns me ſo nearly, conſiſt with a true Love of me, or with the Character of my faithful Diſciples? *What! can you not watch with me one Hour? Watch and pray, leſt ye enter into Temptation.*

Mat. xxvi. 40.

2. A Second Step towards fulfilling our obligation to glory in the Croſs of *Chriſt*, is, if we endeavour to imitate the

the perfect Example he hath ſet us, and to form in our Minds ſome faint Reſemblances of thoſe meek Graces and Virtues, which adorn the Character of our Suffering Saviour. And this Step is a natural Conſequence of the former; for *Imitation* will in ſome Degree ſpring from *Attention*: If *we ſee him as he is*, we *ſhall be like him*, as St. *John* argues. In vain do we boaſt of the Croſs of *Chriſt*, as that whereby the *Guilt* of our Sins is aboliſhed, if the *Power* of them ſtill remains unſubdued in us. Then are his Sufferings our Glory, when they become a fruitful Principle of Holineſs to us, and affect us in ſuch a Manner, as to give us Reſolution and Strength to live above the World, and all its Temptations. *In hoc vince*, was the Inſcription on the Croſs, in that Viſion, by which the firſt *Chriſtian Emperor* was encouraged to give Battle to his Enemies. And this alſo is the Motto, by which every good *Soldier of Chriſt* is to animate himſelf in his ſpiritual Conflicts;

SERM. VI.

1 John iii. 2.

SERM. VI. this is to be written on our Banners, and graven in our Minds: *This is the Victory which overcometh the World, even our Faith* in a crucified *Jesus*. When from Him we have learnt to undervalue the falſe Glories of this World, and to deſpiſe its Terrors, to live above the Gratifications of Senſe, to reſign ourſelves abſolutely to God's Diſpoſal, and to make it *our Meat and our Drink*, our only Study and Delight, *to do the Will of him that ſent us*; when we ſhall have emptied ourſelves of all ſwelling Thoughts, all vain Conceits of our own Privileges and Perfections, and ſhall be thoroughly inſtructed in that great Leſſon of Humility, which he, who was *meek and lowly in Heart*, hath taught us; when we ſhall have ſo *conſidered him that endured the Contradiction of Sinners againſt himſelf, as not to be weary and faint in our Minds*, upon the like Oppoſitions and Trials; ſo, as to bear Indignities and Injuries decently and well, and to forgive and pray for thoſe who do them; ſo as to be able

1 John v. 4.

John iv. 34.

Matt. xi. 29.

Heb. xii. 3.

to

to ſupport ourſelves under any of the Calamities of Life with Equanimity and Patience, with Fortitude and Firmneſs: Then may we be ſaid, moſt truly, moſt effectually to glory in the Croſs of *Chriſt ourſelves*, and to promote the Honour of his Religion with *others*, who ſhall obſerve our Progreſs in all divine Graces and Virtues, and be edified in beholding *our good Converſation in Chriſt Jeſus.* SERM. VI.

3. A *Third* Inſtance and Proof of our glorying as becomes us in the Croſs of *Chriſt*, is, if we frequently and worthily celebrate the Memorial of his Death, the bleſſed Sacrament of his Body and Blood. *For as often as ye eat this Bread, and drink this Cup, ye do ſhew forth the Lord's Death, until he come,* καταγγέλλετε, ye do ſignificantly expreſs it, ye do ſolemnly publiſh and declare it. Indeed *both* the Sacraments, that of *Baptiſm*, and this of the *Lord's Supper*, as they derive their Efficacy from the *Croſs* of *Chriſt*, ſo do they carry in them ſome Reſemblance of his *Death: Baptiſm*, of his Death and Reſurrection *jointly*; the *Euchariſt*, 1 Cor. xi. 26.

SERM. VI. *Euchariſt*, of his Death *only*; being inſtituted for this very End and Purpoſe, to imprint on our Minds, by Symbols of Bread broken, and Wine poured out, a lively Image of the great Sacrifice of the Croſs, and to inſpire us, by that Means, with ſuch holy Thoughts and Affections, as a good *Chriſtian* would have, if he were really an Eye Witneſs of the Paſſion of *Chriſt*. Often therefore ought we to reſort to this myſterious Repaſt, even as often as we have Occaſion (and when have we not Occaſion?) to raiſe our Gratitude, and improve our Devotion, and inflame our Love towards God, for the abundant Mercies beſtowed on us, in the Sufferings and Death of our Saviour. Nor can we abſtain from this Table of the Lord, without forgetting (indeed without ſo far renouncing) our Relation to *Chriſt* crucified, and thereby declaring ourſelves utterly unworthy of that holy Name whereby we are called. *Verily, verily, except* we *eat the Fleſh of the Son of Man, and drink his Blood*, we *have no Life in* us.

John vi. 53.

'Twas

'Twas his dying Charge to us, *Do this in Remembrance of me:* And ſurely, conſidering how much he has done and ſuffered for us, had he commanded us *ſome hard Thing*, we ſhould not have refuſed to comply with him; How much leſs ſhould we refuſe, when we are only commanded to remember him, by an Action naturally pleaſing and delightful to us? when he invites us only to eat and to drink at his own Table?

SERM. VI.

Luke xxii. 16.

Chriſt, the ſame Night that he was betrayed, took Bread: At that very Time, when Men were laying Snares for his Innocence, and contriving his Ruin, did he appoint this great Means of bleſſing and ſtrengthening them: When his Body was now about to be pierced, and his Blood to be ſpilt by the Hand of Violence; then did he inſtitute this Myſtery, by which the Merits of both were to be conveyed to the whole Race of Mankind, even to his Murtherers themſelves, if by Faith and Repentance they ſhould lay hold of them. Muſt not our Stupidity

SERM. VI. and Ingratitude be as amazing as his Love, if the very Circumſtances, in which he gave us this Precept, do not incline us to obey it? Can we be ſaid to *glory in the Croſs of* Chriſt, while we neglect and deſpiſe this great *Memorial* of his Death, which he inſtituted for the good of Souls? Ought we not rather to fear, leſt, by abſtaining wilfully and contemptuouſly from this holy Table, we ſhould involve ourſelves in ſome Degree of *their* Guilt, whom the Apoſtle declares to *have trodden under Foot the Son of God, and counted the Blood of the Covenant, by which they were ſanctified, an unholy Thing?* But finally, we may

Heb. x. 29.

4. In the *Fourth* Place, be ſaid (very properly ſaid) to *glory in the Croſs of* Chriſt, when we zealouſly aſſert, and vindicate the true Doctrine of his *Satisfaction*, againſt all the Enemies and Oppoſers of it; againſt the falſe Notions of the *Jews*, and the falſe Religion of the *Mahometans*; againſt the miſchievous Opinions of ſome *deceived*, or *deceiving Chriſtians*; againſt the vain *Pretences of Reaſon*

Reaſon and *Philoſophy*, and againſt the proud *Inſults* and *Blaſphemies* of *Atheiſts* and *Infidels*. But theſe Particulars would open too large a Field of Matter to me at preſent, and may perhaps (God permitting) be no improper Subject for our Reflexions on a like Occaſion. SERM. VI.

In the mean time, let us conclude, by rendering to the great Lover of Souls the Thanks that are due to Him, for the Redemption, which he, as on this Day, purchaſed for us.

Worthy is the Lamb, that was ſlain, to receive Power, and Riches, and Wiſdom, and Strength, and Honour, and Glory, and Bleſſing: For He hath redeemed us to God by his Blood, out of every Kindred, and Tongue, and People, and Nation. Therefore Bleſſing, and Honour, and Glory, and Power be unto Him that ſitteth upon the Throne, and unto the Lamb, for ever and ever! Amen. Revel. v. 12. Ver. 9. Ver. 13.

The

The Duty of External Worſhip:

A

SERMON

Preached at the

ROLLS CHAPEL,

April 2, 1699.

PSALM xcv. 6.

O come let us worſhip and bow down; let us kneel before the LORD *our Maker.*

SERM. VII.

THESE Words are taken from an Hymn, which is very fitly placed at the Entrance of the Morning Devotions of the Church: It being a ſolemn and earneſt Invitation to the *public* Worſhip of God that follows; and

SERM. VII. and probably employed to that Purpoſe at the Beginning of the Service uſed in the *Jewiſh* Temple.

In that Hymn we are called upon to pay all the Parts of our *internal* and *external* Homage.

The Words, which I have choſen, mention only the *latter* of theſe, *outward Adoration*; which they do, by expreſſing the ſeveral *Modes* of it; as *Worſhiping*, *Bowing down*, and *Kneeling* before God: *Terms*, which thoſe who are ſkilled in the Original, have been at ſome Pains to *explain*, ſo as to ſettle the diſtinct Meaning of *each* of them. I ſhall wave that Enquiry, as not very uſeful, and conſider the Words in their more free and *general* Senſe; as they imply *all* thoſe *devout Poſtures* of Body, in which *outward* Worſhip may be ſuppoſed to conſiſt.

To preſs upon you, as effectually as I can, the Exerciſe of theſe, when we thus meet together in God's Sanctuary, ſhall be the Buſineſs of my preſent Diſcourſe.

In

In which I ſhall endeavour to ſhew how requiſite a reverend and pious Demeanour in the public Service of the Church is, in order to render our Devotion acceptable to God. SERM. VII.

This perhaps, at firſt ſight, may ſeem too plain a Propoſition to need any Proof: And it will be thought, that there is no good *Chriſtian* in the World, who is not very well ſatisfied of the Truth of it. And yet, certain it is, that there are, among thoſe who aim at a more than ordinary Purity in the Worſhip of God, many ſincere but deluded Perſons, who diſapprove and deny it; who think external Modes of Worſhip, not only *unneceſſary*, but *ſuperſtitious*, now under the Goſpel Diſpenſation, when, they ſay, all *bodily* Service is done away, the Law of *outward* Rites and Ceremonies is aboliſhed, and the *true* Worſhipers of God are to *worſhip him* only *in Spirit and Truth*. John iv. 24.

And even among thoſe who admit the Neceſſity of *bodily* Worſhip in the

SERM. VII. *Theory*, yet how many are there that deny it in their *Practice*, and ſo behave themſelves in the public Service of the Church, as to make it appear, that this Truth has not yet in good earneſt reached their Hearts, or not ſunk very deep into them: Or if it has, the Impreſſions it once made upon their Minds, are now grown ſo faint and weak, that they operate but little, unleſs by proper Arguments and Motives they be continually excited and kept alive in them.

In order therefore to convince thoſe who ſeem not to have ſufficiently *conſidered* the Importance of this Duty; and in order alſo to raiſe the Devotion of ſuch as are remiſs and careleſs in the Diſcharge of it; I ſhall, in what follows, conſider *External Worſhip*, as a fit and reaſonable Duty, upon theſe three ſeveral Accounts. Either as one Part of that *natural Homage*, which the *whole* Man, Soul and Body, does, by the firſt Principles of *Reaſon*, and Law of his *Nature*, owe to his ſove-

reign Lord, his great Creator and Preſerver. Or as an *Help* and *Aſſiſtance* towards promoting the *ſpiritual* Worſhip of our *Souls*. Or laſtly, as an *outward Sign*, by which we expreſs to *others* the Religious Eſteem and Veneration that dwells in *us*: That is (in a Word) it may be conſidered with relation to *God*, *Ourſelves*, or our *Neighbour*. SERM. VII.

I. *Firſt*, then, *External* Adoration may be conſidered as a Part of that *natural Homage*, which the *whole* Man, Soul and Body, owes to God, upon the Account of his Creation and Preſervation *of* us, and his ſovereign Dominion over us.

If we are to worſhip God for the Being, and the Benefits which we receive at his Hands, as the plain Rules of Reaſon inform us; then does it ſeem agreeable to the ſame Reaſon, that we ſhould make Uſe of *all* thoſe ſeveral Ways of Worſhip, which do beſt expreſs the *total* and *entire* Dependance

SERM. VII. we have on him. The *Soul* worſhips him, by framing to itſelf awful Ideas of his Majeſty and great Excellencies, by invoking Aid and Aſſiſtance from him, and by putting up Praiſes to him. The *Body* worſhips him, by bowing and proſtrating itſelf; and by all thoſe humble and devout Poſtures, which ſuit beſt with thoſe *inward* Affections and Diſpoſitions of the Mind. *Both* together make up that compleat Harmony of Divine Worſhip, which reſults from the Agreement of the ſeveral Parts of our Frame in the ſame Acts of Acknowledgment, that *Odour of a ſweet Smell, a Sacrifice acceptable, well pleaſing to God.*

Phil. iv. 18.

Indeed, as we have no Way of forming to ourſelves any Idea of God, but by conſidering the ſeveral limited Perfections and Excellencies, that are variouſly ſcattered among his Creatures, and attributing them to *him without Bounds*; ſo have we no other Way of applying ourſelves to him, as his Vaſſals, his Dependants, and the Works of

of his Hands, than by conſidering what are thoſe *inward* and *outward* Marks of Reſpect, which we uſually pay to the *Dignity* of any *Man* here upon Earth, to his *Authority* over us, or his *Beneficence* towards us; and by giving them to *God*, in a much *higher* Degree, than we do to *Man*. Now, the Expreſſion of our Eſteem of any Earthly Good, the reſpect we bear towards Perſons of great Excellence, Parents, Benefactors, or Governors, is contained in theſe *Two* Things; a Veneration of *Mind* for them, and a Submiſſion of *Body* to them. SERM. VII.

And whoever fails in *either* of theſe, is, by the general Conſent of Mankind, reckoned to be ſo far wanting in his Duty, and to deviate from thoſe Rules of Subordination, which God has made neceſſary for this World.

Of this the Mind of Man is very ſenſible; and being therefore conſcious of the ſuperlative Excellencies of the Divine Being, and of the infinite Goodneſs of its Nature towards us, finds it-

SERM. VII. ſelf uneaſy under theſe Apprehenſions, till it has paid its *due Homage*, its *Debt* of Honour to it. Which, nevertheleſs it has no *Ability* to do, otherwiſe than by applying to *God* thoſe *outward* ſenſible Marks of Reſpect, and thoſe *inward* Submiſſions of Soul, which are in Uſe among the Sons of *Men*.

To theſe therefore it flies, theſe it lays hold of, eager and impatient to do *ſomething*. (it knows not well *what*) in humble Acknowledgment of his Attributes, and in Return to his many loving Kindneſſes.

It ſees very well, how diſproportioned all our Acts of Homage are to the Divine Greatneſs: That God dwells in inacceſſible Light, to which none of our Services can reach; in the Glory of an eternal Majeſty, which nothing we can do, can either add to, or diminiſh. Nevertheleſs perceiving in itſelf a reſtleſs Principle, exciting it continually to the Love and Honour of God; ſtrong Endeavours after Gratitude, and no other Way of exerting them,

them, but by *inward* and *outward* Acts of Worſhip; theſe, how inſignificant ſoever, it ventures to pay, in ſure Confidence, that they will be grateful to that Being, which *accepteth according to that a Man hath, and not according to that he hath not.* SERM. VII. 2 Cor. viii. 12.

Thus does *External* Adoration become a Point of *Natural Homage*, due to the ſupreme Lord of the World, in Token of that entire Dependance we have on him; the Dependance of the *whole* Man, *Soul* and *Body*, which *both* equally came forth from his Hands, and are *both* equally ſuſtained by him. *Both* therefore muſt join in paying the common Tribute of Praiſe; which, however to *Him* it may be nothing worth, of leſs Account than *a Drop of the Bucket*, or a *ſmall Duſt of the Balance*, yet to *Us-ward* is the very *Law* of our Nature, and our bounden *Duty* and Service. Iſ. xl. 15.

And *this* is a Way of Reaſoning, which the Holy Ghoſt in *both* Teſtaments hath ſanctified, and taught us to uſe.

SERM. VII.

We are invited by the good *Pſalmiſt* in my Text, to *bow down, and kneel before God.* And the Reaſon follows: *For he is the Lord our God, and we are the People of his Hands.* Agreeably to which the Apoſtle urges us, to *glorify God in our Body, and in our Spirit, which are God's.* We are to glorify him in our *Body*, as well as our *Spirit*, by *outward* as well as *inward* Devotion; ſince there is the ſame Argument for both; they are God's: *His* they are, and to *Him* they muſt do their Homage.

And therefore 'tis a remarkable Paſſage, which the ſame Apoſtle hath: Rom. xii. 1. *I beſeech you, Brethren, by the Mercies of God, that you preſent your Bodies a living Sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God; which is your reaſonable Service.* Though he mentions only the preſenting our *Bodies*, yet he gives that the Name of our *reaſonable Service*, ἡ λογικὴ λατρεία ὑμῶν, a Worſhip agreeable to *Reaſon*, and to the Suggeſtions of our natural Faculties.

We

We all look for the Glorification, not only of our *Souls*, but *Bodies*, in the Life to come. Now a *Reward* ſuppoſeth a *Work:* It is meet and right therefore, that we ſhould worſhip and glorify God in *this* Life with the *Body* as well as the *Soul*, if ſo be we expect that God ſhould glorify *both our Bodies and Souls in another*. The *outward* Worſhip, without the *inward* is dead; and again, the *inward*, without the *outward*, is not complete; even as the Glorification of the *Soul*, ſeparate from the *Body*, is not, nor ſhall be conſummate, till the *Body* be again raiſed, and reunited to it. SERM. VII.

Indeed, they who derogate ſo much from *bodily* Worſhip in the Service of the true God, do by Conſequence render *Idolatry* a *Sin* far leſs heinous in Degree than it is. For the *Sin of Idolatry* conſiſts, we know, in our communicating that Honour to a Creature, which is due unto the Creator alone. And therefore, in the ſame Proportion as external Worſhip is due to the Creator,

SERM. VII.

tor, will the Grievouſneſs and Guilt of *that* Sin be, by which we transfer that Worſhip from the Creator to the Creature; for it cannot be denied, but that *Part* of the Sin of *Idolatry* conſiſts even in the *outward* Worſhip given to an *Idol*. And therefore, if *outward* Worſhip be not inſiſted on with any Strictneſs now under the Goſpel, as a Debt due to *God*, neither will the paying it to *Idols* be in any high Degree culpable.

Thus does the Conſideration of *outward* Worſhip, as it reſpects *God*, the Object of it, afford us one powerful Motive to a compoſed and ſolemn Behaviour in the *public* Service of the Church. Let us ſee, what Force it will have, as it relates to *ourſelves*; Or as it is,

II. *Secondly*, an Help and Aſſiſtance, towards promoting the ſpiritual Worſhip of our *Souls*.

There is ſo cloſe a *Connexion* between the *Mind* and its *Organs*, that they

they act, as it were, by Conſent; and the Motions of the *one* do commonly, and in ſome Degree, paſs into the *other*. And this natural *Sympathy* ſhews itſelf no where more remarkably than in Acts of Devotion. When the *Mind* is warmed with heavenly Thoughts, and wrought up into ſome Degrees of holy Ecſtacy, it ſtays not there, but communicates theſe Impreſſions to the *Body*; and excites thoſe ſeveral Actions, without, that carry a Reſemblance to what is done *within*.

SERM. VII.

On the *other* Side; devout Poſtures of *Body*, when perceived and attended to by him that uſes them, do *as* certainly paſs onward and impart their Force to the *Mind* alſo; raiſing there thoſe ſeveral Paſſions and Emotions, to which the outward Act is naturally conjoined. 'Tis true, the Riſe of all is originally from *within*; *there* the Springs of Action firſt begin to play; and from *thence* Orders are ſent out to the *Body*, what Motions ſhall ariſe. But then, after that, *this Engine*, thus moved,

SERM. VII. moved; acts backward upon its firſt principle, the *Soul*; returns the Force, that was lent it from thence, with Intereſt; and improves that *Spark* of holy Fire, which firſt ſprung up there, into a great and mighty *Flame*.

External Worſhip then becomes this way a juſt and reaſonable *Duty*, inaſmuch as it is naturally fitted to excite like *inward* Acts of Devotion; and being itſelf perceived, does, in a Way not perceived by thoſe who yet feel the Effects of it, work upon the moſt hidden Powers of the Mind. And it is very well, it does ſo: For the Mind of Man is in the Duties of Religion ſo little *Miſtreſs* of ſtrict Attention, ſo unable to fix itſelf ſteadily even on God, its beſt and worthieſt Object, that it cannot have too many Aſſiſtances from *without*, in order to it. As therefore God hath ſo tempered the *Body* together in all its *Members*, that *the Eye cannot ſay unto the Hand, I have no need of thee; nor the Head again unto the Feet, I have no need of you*: ſo has he alſo

1 Cor xii. 21.

alſo tempered the *whole Frame* of Man in ſuch a Manner, as that the Parts of it may mutually ſupport each other. Nor can the *Soul*, in its moſt ſpiritual and ſublime Acts, thoſe of Devotion, reject the *Body*, as uſeleſs and unaſſiſting. *Nay much more* (as St. *Paul* continues his Reaſoning) *that Part, which ſeems to be more feeble, is neceſſary.* SERM. VII. 1 Cor. xii. 22.

We uſually blame the *Body* to an high Degree, as the great Clog and Hindrance of the *Soul*; the Obſtructer of its free and natural Motions, the Offerer of impious, of filthy, of vain Images; the Sollicitor to every evil act, all that defiles the Man. And this is generally what *may* be ſaid of it, with a great deal of Juſtice. For it *is* all this, and it *does* all this in a thouſand ſeveral Inſtances. But in the Caſe of Devotion now before us, Things may be far otherwiſe managed, and the Body rendered ſo uſeful and ſerviceable to the Soul in *this* Duty, as to make Amends (as it were) for the Obſtructions it gives it in the Performance of

SERM. VII. of many *others*. Here it may be made to draw equally in the Yoke of Duty: Nay even to give *Wings* to the Mind, which it preſſeth down, and overwhelms on many other Occaſions. Nor is the Body more beholden to the *Soul*, for the *Beginning* of its Motions, than the *Soul* afterwards is to the *Body*, for the *Increaſe* of hers. But

III. *Thirdly*, We have ſtill another Way of conſidering *outward* Worſhip, as it is a *Sign*, by which we expreſs to *others* the religious Eſteem and Veneration that dwells in *us*. And we ſhall find, that from hence too we are highly obliged to the moſt ſolemn and devout *Uſe* of it. For as in the former Inſtances it has appeared to be an Inſtrument of *God's* Honour, and our *own* particular Advantage, ſo here we ſhall find that it reaches even to the common Good of our *Neighbour* too.

And certainly great are the Advantages which the People of God, when they are met together, do mutually receive

receive from it. The *cold* and remiſs Worſhiper is, at the Sight of an exemplary Piety, kindled into ſome Degrees of holy *Warmth*; the *fervent* and devout, in the Preſence of it, becomes *yet more* enflamed. A religious Emulation riſes then in the Breaſts of the *Faithful*, an holy Strife and Deſire of excelling. He that ſees *another* compoſed in his Behaviour throughout, and fixed down to the holy Duty he is engaged in, grows aſhamed of his own Indifference and Indecencies, his ſpiritual Diſſipations and Dryneſs, and preſently ſets himſelf to imitate that amiable Pattern, and reſolves to be remarkably devout, and as much the Object of *other* Mens Imitation. SERM. VII.

But *Believers* are not the only Perſons, that receive Benefit by it; *Unbelievers* too, tho' unwillingly, have their Share. The profane Scoffer, who dares encounter a *ſingle Chriſtian*, without Shame or Fear of Reproof, has here an Anſwer to his bold Scoffs, in that ſtill and powerful Argument, which

SERM. VII. which ariſes from the Behaviour of a devout Multitude, worſhiping God *in the Beauty of Holineſs:* Such an Argument as will deſtroy all its unreaſonable Suſpicions, and convince him of the Sincerity of Men's Hearts towards God, by the natural unaffected Signs of it, which are ſhewn in his Service: Such as will put him in mind of the Numbers of devout and good Men, againſt which he engages; lead him on from the Thought of the preſent Congregation to thoſe of the ſame kind that are ſpread over the Face of the Earth; and make him ſit down and conſider, whether with ſuch a ſmall Strength (his own, and that of a few more) he can encounter ſo many Thouſands, even the united Wiſdom and Practice of Mankind. Surely, as St. *Paul* argues in relation to the Propheſying practiſed in the Primitive Church, *if all thus worſhip, and there cometh in one that believeth not, or one unlearned, he is convinced of all, he is judged of all. And thus*

1 Cor. xiv. 24, 25.

are

are the Secrets of his Heart made manifeſt; SERM.
and ſo falling down on his Face, he will VII.
worſhip God, and report, that God is in you ——
of a Truth.

Thus have I *explained* the ſeveral *Grounds*, on which *external* Adoration ſtands, and the ſeveral good *Uſes*, to which it may be employed; how much the *Honour* of God depends upon it, the Advancement of Piety in our *own* Breaſt, and in *that* of our Neighbour. And ſure I need exhort you but *briefly* to the *Practice* of that, which appears every way ſo plain and ſo reaſonable a *Duty*. Let us then lay up theſe Thoughts in our Hearts, *and keep our Feet* (as the Wiſe Man ſpeaks) *when we go to the Sanctuary*, by a careful Reflection upon them! Let us carry in our Ears always when we enter into the Place of God's public Worſhip, the Sound of thoſe Expreſſions he uſed to *Moſes* out of the flaming Buſh: *Put off thy Shoes from thy Feet,* Exod. iii. 5.
for the Place whereon thou ſtandeſt is holy Ground!

SERM. VII.

Let us conſider with ourſelves, if ſuch and ſo many are the *Advantages* that ſpring from a due Care of *external* Behaviour, how great muſt the Inconveniences then be, that ariſe from the Neglect of it? from an *indecent and ſlovenly Worſhip*; a Worſhip fit neither for *God*, who is a God of Beauty and Order, to *receive*; nor for *Man*, who is the only Creature in this lower World that has a Senſe of theſe Things, to *pay*. Surely nothing leſs can follow from ſo *looſe* a Practice, than the *Decay* of Religion in all its vital and ſubſtantial Parts; a Forgetfulneſs of that God, whom to have always in our Thoughts is the greateſt *Preſervative* againſt Sin that a Chriſtian Man can have; the Deriſions of the Proud towards theſe our ſolemn Meetings, and the open Scorn of every thing that is holy.

From the primitive Writers of the Story of the Church we learn, that the *firſt Chriſtians*, who were ſo exemplary in all the Parts of Chriſtian Duty, above

above thoſe of *latter* Times, outſtripped us in nothing more than in the *outward* Marks of Devotion and Reverence, which appeared upon them in their public Aſſemblies. They reſorted to the Houſe of God with the ſame holy Awe and Reverence, as if they were really to meet, and to converſe with him there: They continued, during the Time of Divine Service, immoveably fixed to their Duty, without the leaſt Sign or Token of a wandering, or alienated Mind. They contented not themſelves with the *ordinary* Poſtures of Devotion, ſuch as Genuflection, the Bowing of the Head or the Body, but did (as one of the Ancients ſpeaks) proſtrate themſelves on the Pavement, cover it with their Bodies, and waſh it with Tears of devout Joy. SERM. VII.

God grant, that, if theſe Heights of Devotion be too exalted for an Age ſo degenerate as this, in which *Iniquity abounds* and *the Love of many is waxen cold*; yet, at leaſt, that *ſo much* of the Life and Spirit of *Primitive* Piety may

SERM. VII. be kept up among us, as may render our Behaviour *ſober and compoſed* in the Uſe of holy Things, and take away from wicked Men an Occaſion to blaſpheme!

Now to God the Father, &c.

External

External Worſhip not ſufficient alone:

A

SERMON

Preached at

St. JAMES's Chapel,

In the Year 1711-12.

LAMENT. iii. 14.

Let us lift up our Hearts, with our Hands, unto God in the Heavens.

SERM. VIII.

THESE are the Words of *Jeremiah*, ſpoken to the *Jews* of his Time, who were very exact and punctual in the *outward* Ceremonies and Performances of Religion, but very deficient in the *inward* Life and Reality of it. They reſorted to the

SERM. VIII. Temple conſtantly, and were careful to practiſe the various Rites which the Law of *Moſes* preſcribed: But they did not bring along with them a Diſpoſition of *Soul* ſuitable to thoſe Solemnities; their Mind was alienated from the Service, even while they were performing it. The Prophet, ſenſible of this great Defect in their way of Worſhip, thus exhorts them to the Cure of it. *Let us lift up our Hearts* (ſays he) *with our Hands, unto God in the Heavens.*

Which Words refer to the *Jews*, as performing the *Public* Service of their Church in the Temple or the Synagogue; and imply, that the Devotion of the *Hand*, without that of the *Heart*, is of no Acceptance with God; that *bodily Exerciſe* (in this Senſe of the Word) *profiteth but little*, unleſs accompanied with an holy Warmth and Elevation of *Mind*.

1 Tim. iv. 8.

This is a very plain but unregarded Truth: Many *Chriſtians* there are, who ſeem not to be thoroughly convinced

vinced of it; and the beſt of us, God knows (ſuch is the Infirmity of our Nature) want ſometimes to be awakened into a vigorous and lively Senſe of it. SERM. VIII.

Many Frequenters of ſuch religious Aſſemblies as theſe, think their Duty ſufficiently diſcharged by a punctual and regular Attendance upon them. If they are preſent during the Time of Divine Service, if they take their Share in the ſeveral Parts of it, join in the *Hymns* and the *Reſponſes*, and add their *Amen* to the Prayers; if their *outward* Behaviour be every way decent, and agreeable to the holy Uſages of the Church; though they are *inwardly* abſent from the Duty, wherein they ſeem to be engaged, and their wandering Thoughts are employed all the while on foreign and vain Objects; yet ſhall they go away ſatisfied and juſtified in their own Conceit, as if they had performed the whole of their reaſonable Service, and not offered *the Sacrifice of Fools*; forgetting the Reproof which Eccl. v. 1.

SERM. VIII.

Eſaias firſt gave to the whole *Jewiſh* Nation, and which our Saviour applied particularly to the *Scribes* and *Phariſees*: *This People draweth nigh unto me with their Mouths, and honoureth me with their Lips; but their Heart is far from me.*

Matt. xv. 8.

That ſuch a *Mock* Worſhip as this, ſuch a mere Face and Form of Devotion, is not what God requires, what he will hearken to, or reward, give me leave briefly to ſhew, by obſerving, how unproportioned it is to the *Divine* Nature, and our *Own*, to the great *End* and *Deſign* of Prayer, and to thoſe mighty *Bleſſings* and *Benefits*, with which, when duly performed, it is certainly attended.

The *Object* of our religious Addreſſes is *God*; *that God, who is a Spirit*; and who, therefore, will be *worſhiped in Spirit* (as our Saviour argues) with all the Faculties and Powers of our Mind, with the utmoſt Intention and Vigour of Thought: And he, therefore, who lifts up his *Hands* to him, without any

John iv. 24.

Elevation

Elevation of his *Heart*, Affronts him, SERM. inſtead of Adoring him. *Bleſs the Lord,* VIII. *O my Soul, and all that is within me, bleſs* Pſ. ciii. 1. *his holy Name!* ſays good *David.* He ſummons every Faculty and Affection of his Soul, *all that is within him*, to do Homage to God, as knowing that the mere *Outward* Homage, unaccompanied by the *Inward*, would be a Lifeleſs and Uſeleſs Performance. What! do we hope to impoſe upon *God*, as we ſometimes do upon *Men*, by a mere *Form of Godlineſs*, without the *Power of it?* Do we think, that he requires our Adoration and Homage for his *own* Sake; and therefore contents himſelf with the Honours that are done him by *outward* Shews and Appearances? He, *who requireth Truth in the inward Parts, to whom* Pſ. li. 6. Heb. iv. 13. *all Things are naked and open*, and who Pſ. vii. 9. *tryeth the very Hearts and Reins!* He, whoſe Language in holy Writ is, *My* Prov. xxiii. *Son, give me thy Heart! Give me thy Heart,* 26. whilſt thou art performing any Part of thy Duty that relates either to *Me*, thy *ſelf*, or thy *Neighbour*; but chiefly *give*

me

SERM. VIII.

me thy Heart, whilſt thou art immediately addreſſing thyſelf to me by *Prayer* and *Praiſe*; whilſt thou art actually Converſing with me, Intreating and Adoring me: *Give me thy Heart* at ſuch a Time; or elſe *all* that thou giveſt me beſides, will prove *a vain Oblation*. Again,

Let us conſider our *own* Nature as well as that of the *Divine* Being. Are we not *Reaſonable* Creatures? And ought not a *Reaſonable* Creature to pay an *entire* and *reaſonable* Service? How can *We* be ſaid to worſhip God, while the better half of us is unconcerned in the Act? It is the *Mind*, chiefly, that is the *Man*; and where the Mind therefore is abſent, the Man is not preſent: He offers not a living and a breathing Victim, but a dead and lifeleſs Carcaſe; and *with ſuch a Sacrifice how can God be well pleaſed?*

What is *Prayer*, but an Aſcent of the Mind towards God? an holy Engine, by which we lift up our Spirits to the great Father of Spirits; maintain a ſweet Inter-

Intercourſe with him, and breath out, from the Bottom of our Hearts, our common Deſires and Acknowledgments to him? And what is there of this, in *coming unto him, as his People cometh, in ſitting before him as his People ſitteth; in ſhewing much Love with our Mouth, while our Heart goeth after its Covetouſneſs?* Ezek. xxxiii. 31.

SERM. VIII.

Wondrous is the *Efficacy* of Prayer, as repreſented in Scripture; mighty Things are there ſaid to have been done in virtue of it. But how were they done? By the mere bending of the Knees, and uttering of Words and Syllables? No! but by the Attention of the Heart, by Zeal, and Fervency. It is only *the fervent Prayer of a Righteous Man*, that *availeth much;* And when *Elias*, by his prevalent Interpoſition with God, ſhut up or opened the Heavens, brought Drought or Rain upon the Earth, it is ſaid of him, προσευχῇ προσηύξατο, that he prayed ardently and *earneſtly*. James v. 16. James v. 17.

Indeed this Qualification of *Prayer* is enjoined us by God; not only as a becoming

SERM. VIII.

coming Expreſſion of our religious Reverence towards him; but as a proper and natural Means of working in our Souls thoſe good Diſpoſitions, which his bleſſed Spirit delights in, and delights to reward. We are directed to aſk with a fixed and fervent Mind, becauſe ſuch a Manner of aſking fits and qualifies us for receiving; makes us humble, ſubmiſſive, dependent, affects us with a deep Senſe of our own Inſufficiency and Unworthineſs, and of the Divine Bounty and Goodneſs; ſuſpends the evil Motions and Deſires of our Hearts for a time; and produces in us an heavenly Frame and Temper of Soul. This is the neareſt and moſt immediate Effect of *Prayer*, which muſt firſt be obtained, in order to the obtaining of our Requeſts. And how therefore can he, who is a Stranger to the *One* of theſe, ever hope to arrive at the *Other?*

Can we imagine that Pardon of Sin, and Peace of Conſcience; the Fruits of the Spirit, and Support againſt Temptations; in a Word, the Bleſſings of this World

World and the next, with which God has promiſed to reward our Prayers, ſhould be purchaſed at the cheap Expence of Forms and Appearances? That thoſe Devotions which affect not *Us* firſt, ſhould affect *God* afterwards? That he ſhould attend to, or regard, ſuch Requeſts, as we neither regard, nor attend to ourſelves? SERM. VIII.

Let us then not mock God, and deceive ourſelves! Let us not think we have fulfilled our Duty merely by reſorting to the Church, and adding one to the Number of the Congregation; by doing as other Men do, and ſaying as other Men ſay there; nor hope to atone by an outwardly decent Behaviour, for an inwardly alienated Mind. But let us, under a due Senſe of the preceding Reflexions, whenever we come to the Houſe of God, not fail to come *whole* and entire; to *offer and preſent unto God* (as the Liturgy ſpeaks) *ourſelves, our Souls, and Bodies, to be a reaſonable, holy and lively Sacrifice to him:* Let us reſolve to *worſhip* him, not with our Lips

and

SERM. VIII.

and Knees only, but (as we are obliged to *love* him) *even with all our Heart, and with all our Soul, and with all our Mind, and with all our Strength!*

Mark xi. 30.

God be thanked, by whoſe good Providence we are Members of a Church, where the public Offices of Religion are ſo modelled and contrived, as to be apt, in every Part of them, to raiſe the *Attention*, and kindle an holy Flame in the *Breaſts* of all ſincere Worſhipers. I cannot better ſpend the remaining Part of my Time, than in pointing out to you the *great Advantages* which we, in this Reſpect, enjoy, and by that Means ſhewing you, how *inexcuſable* we are, if we neglect to improve them, *more inexcuſable* than the Members of any other Church, or Communion in the Chriſtian World. For,

1. The *Language*, wherein our Service is performed, cannot but be of uſe to fix and keep alive our *Attention*. 'Tis our own Mother Tongue, what all of us are acquainted with; and can therefore liſten to with Eaſe and Delight, becauſe

we underſtand it. There *is* a Church, whoſe public Prayers are put up in a Language unknown to the greateſt Part of thoſe who are to join in them. But how can the Heart be affected by the mere *Sound* of Words, while it is utterly a Stranger to their *Meaning?* The public Devotions, therefore, of an unlettered *Papiſt*, muſt needs be one continued Scene of Diſtractions and Wanderings, from the Beginning to the End of them. SERM. VIII.

Nor are our Offices drawn up only in our *own* Tongue, but in the moſt eaſy and plain Parts of it, which lie open to *Chriſtians* of the meaneſt Capacities and Attainments. There is nothing fantaſtical in the Expreſſion of them, no vain Uſe of ſuch hard Phraſes of Scripture, as tend rather to amuſe and puzzle, than to inſtruct common Hearers; nothing which approaches to that myſterious, unintelligible Way of Speaking, in which ſome either deceiving or deceived Chriſtians delight; nothing that ſavours of Singularity, Hypocriſy,

SERM. VIII.

Hypocriſy, or Enthuſiaſm. Whatever we meet with there, is plain, ſimple, natural; and yet at the ſame time ſolemn, majeſtic, moving; ſignificant and full, ſound and wholeſome: It carries both Light and Heat in it, and is fitted equally to inform the Underſtandings and inflame the Affections of the wiſeſt and weakeſt of *Chriſtians*. I need not ſay how far this Excellence of our Service contributes to rouſe and inſpirit the Attention of thoſe who partake of it; *eſpecially*, if it be conſidered,

2. That theſe Prayers and Praiſes are offered up in a *premeditated* Form of Words, with which every one is before acquainted: For *this* alſo I muſt reckon among the peculiar Advantages of our Way of Worſhip, towards faſtening down the Minds of Men to that holy Duty, wherein they are engaged. I grant, indeed, that *Unpremeditated* Prayers, uttered with great Fluency, with a devout Warmth and Earneſtneſs, are apt to make ſtrong and awakening Impreſſions on the Minds of the

the Generality of Hearers. But it may be doubted, whether the Attention *thus* raiſed, be *that* which we are now recommending; whether it be not an Attention rather of Curioſity and Surpriſe, than of a real Piety and ſound Devotion. For a good and conſcientious Man, who is to join in a Prayer, with which he was before unacquainted, muſt needs do it with ſome little Diffidence and Fear, leſt there ſhould be any Thing in the *Matter* or *Manner* of that Prayer, improper and unbecoming: He muſt ſuſpend his Aſſent to thoſe *unknown* Requeſts, till he has ſo far conſidered them, as to be ſure that they are fit for him to agree in. And while he is thus employing his Thoughts on *one* Petition or Sentence, another ſucceeds, which will require a like Degree of Suſpence and Deliberation: And this cannot but check his Devotion, by dividing and breaking the Force of his Mind. Whereas he, who offers up his Requeſts to God in a known and ſtated Form, has no Avocations of

SERM. VIII.

SERM. VIII. this Kind to ſtruggle with; and can, therefore, apply himſelf directly and vigorouſly to his holy Taſk, and *aſk in Faith, nothing doubting.* He fears not, leſt unfitting Requeſts ſhould be made, or fit ones clothed in unſuitable Language; and is therefore at Leiſure to excite all the Powers and Affections of his Soul, and to engage them in that ſpiritual Service. This, I ſay, is a peculiar Advantage, which attends the Uſe of precompoſed Prayers; and if there be many, who do not find and feel this Effect of them, it is not, I am perſuaded, the Fault of *ſet Forms*, but *their own:* They want Attention and Fervency in *this* Way of Worſhip; and they would want it *equally*, perhaps *much more* in any *other*.

James i. 6.

3. It is yet a further great Advantage which we of this Communion enjoy, that our Service is not one continued Act of Devotion, but is interrupted by many little Breaks and Pauſes, and conſiſts of ſeveral diſtinct and entire Forms of Petition and Praiſe; by which Means

the Mind is eaſed and relieved from too long and ſtrict an Attention; retires a little, and returns, as it were, with new Strength to its Duty. The *Collects* of our Liturgy are ſo *ſhort*, that a devout *Chriſtian* may, even whilſt he is pronouncing his *Amen* at the *cloſe*, by a ſudden Glance of Thought, recollect every Branch of them; and ſo contract into that ſingle Word the whole Force of the preceding Prayer. Nay, the very Frame and Contrivance of theſe *Collects*, is highly uſeful to raiſe and to enliven our Devotions, inaſmuch as they generally begin with the awful Mention of ſome of God's Attributes, and always end with reminding us of the Blood and Interceſſion of *Jeſus*. And what Conſiderations in Religion are there more operative and more awakening than *theſe*, which return ſo often upon our Minds, during the Courſe of our excellent Service?

SERM. VIII.

4. *Which* contributes alſo to render us attent and devout, by that uſeful and affecting *Variety*, with which it

SERM. VIII.

abounds. There is in it a *Variety* of all Sorts of religious Duty, in which a Creature can apply itſelf to its Creator. *There* we confeſs our Sins, and intercede with God for the Pardon of them: *There* we deprecate the divine *Judgments* that may be inflicted, and pray for all the *Bleſſings* (Spiritual and Temporal) that can be beſtowed on ourſelves, or others; and *there* we put up our *Praiſes* and *Thankſgivings* to God for all the Inſtances of his Mercy and Goodneſs towards us. *There* we hear the holy Scriptures read, and profeſs our Belief of the great Articles of Faith: And theſe different Parts of divine Worſhip are ſo happily intermixed, and ſucceed each other in ſo beautiful an Order, that the Mind of the Worſhiper has always a new and pleaſing Employment.

As the Prieſt has his Share in the Performance of theſe Offices, ſo the *People* too have theirs; and in a much larger Proportion, than belongs to them in any other Chriſtian Aſſemblies. *Each*

is

is employed in ſtirring up the *other* into an holy and affectionate Emulation of Heart and Voice; and they do therefore *mutually* provoke and kindle each others Devotion. SERM. VIII.

5. I add alſo (in the *laſt* Place) that the Service of our Sanctuary is particularly contrived to promote Attention by the *decent*, *orderly*, and *ſolemn Manner*, in which it is performed. For it is neither on the one Side ſo very plain and ſimple, as not to be able to rouſe; nor on the other, ſo ſplendid and gaudy, as to be apt to diſtract the Mind. It is duly tempered between theſe *Extremes*, and partakes of either, as far as either is requiſite towards creating and cheriſhing a ſound and reaſonable, a warm and active Devotion. Pictures indeed, and Images, to which the Church of *Rome* in this Caſe has recourſe, fix the Attention; but it is on a wrong *Object*. A Multitude of vain and pompous Ceremonies, a Variety of rich Habits and Ornaments, Muſic framed for Delight, without Improvement:

SERM. VIII.

Theſe Things, indeed, may render an Aſſembly attent; but ſo likewiſe would a Scene in the Theatre. The Devotion they produce (if indeed they produce any) goes no further than the Senſes; it is not that of the Heart and Spirit. But with us, all the *outſide* of our Worſhip contributes towards the *inward* Life and Reality of it: Our Churches are decently adorned; they who officiate at our Altars, are decently habited; our daily Service is performed, and our Sacraments adminiſtred in a becoming and reverend Manner; our Muſic is always, or always ought to be, grave and ſolemn. Every Part and Circumſtance of our Worſhip is ſo ordered, as to inſpire us with an holy Reverence and Awe, and ſo far to keep the outward Senſes awake, as their Vigilance may be of uſe to give Wings to our Devotion, and Vigour to our Minds.

Since therefore we have ſo many ſignal Helps and Advantages towards worſhiping God in his Sanctuary with an heavenly Frame and Temper of Soul, let

let us reſolve from this Moment to make a due Uſe of them; to repair often to the Houſe of God with holy Reverence and Awe, and *to lift up our Hearts, together with our Hands,* whenever we thus approach him, *in the Beauty of Holineſs.*

SERM. VIII.

Which that we may all of us do, God of his infinite Mercy grant, &c.

The Uſefulneſs of Church Muſic:

A

SERMON

Preached on

St. CECILIA's Day,

In the Year 1698.

PSAL. lvii. 7, 8.

My Heart is fixed, O God, my Heart is fixed; I will ſing, and give Praiſe. Awake up, my Glory! awake Pſaltery, and Harp! I myſelf will awake right early.

IT is the *Man after God's Heart* whoſe Words theſe are; and in them he points out to us one of the chief Methods, by which he became ſo: Even

SERM. IX.

SERM. IX. Even by preparing and qualifying his *own* Heart in the beſt Manner that he could, for the Duties of the Sanctuary; and by endeavouring, when he aſſiſted at thoſe Solemnities, to perform them with the utmoſt Attention, Alacrity, and holy Warmth of Mind, of which he was capable.

He enters not on the divine Praiſes, till he finds himſelf in ſuch a Poſture, and under ſuch a Compoſure of Mind, as ſuits with that holy Employment: *My Heart is fixed*, ſays he, *O God my Heart is fixed:* Then, and then only, it is Time for him to go on, and ſay, *I will ſing, and give Praiſe.* And that he may be ſure to preſerve, to feed, and to improve the good Diſpoſition he is in, he calls to his Aid thoſe excellent Helps to Devotion, which he had ſo often tried with ſo good Succeſs, *Vocal* and *Inſtrumental Muſic*; *Awake up, my Glory*, ſays he, *awake, Pſaltery and Harp!* By his *Glory* he means his *Tongue*, the moſt noble Organ of the Body of Man, eſpecially when

when employed in celebrating the Praiſe and Glory of God. By *Pſaltery and Harp* (which alone are mentioned) we muſt underſtand all the ſeveral Inſtruments of Muſic, which were, by his Appointment brought into the Temple-worſhip: And with theſe Aſſiſtances, theſe Encouragements, he ventures now to undertake for himſelf, that he will maintain that lively Erection of Mind, with which he enters on the divine Service, throughout the whole Courſe of it; that he will rouſe up every Faculty, Affection, and Power of his Soul, and keep them fixed to the holy Work they are about, without Diſtraction or Wandring: *I myſelf will awake*, ſays he. And when he adds to all this that he will do it *right early*, he intimates to us the particular Time, at which ſuch Reſolutions as theſe are beſt executed; 'tis in the *Morning*, the Seaſon of Devotion, when the Mind is freſh and vigorous, untired with the Buſineſs of the Day, and untainted with ill Images and Impreſſions.

This

SERM. IX.

This I take to be the full Import of those Words of the devout *Psalmist*, which I have read to you; and which, I think, I may now improperly discourse on under these Propositions; By shewing you,

I. *First*, That the great Thing which recommends our public Devotions to God, is, our performing them with an awakened, fixed, and lively Attention of the Mind. That therefore,

II. *Secondly*, All the pious Helps and Expedients, that conduce to this End, are to be laid hold of; particularly those which the Text points out to us, the Use of *vocal* and *instrumental* Harmony.

III. *Thirdly*, That the *Way* of performing divine Service *in the Church of England*, is better fitted to promote this good End [the fixing our Attention, and enflaming our Affections] than any *other* public Form of Devotions

votions now practiſed *in the Chriſtian* SERM.
World: That it enjoys this Advantage, IX.
as in ſeveral *other* Reſpects, ſo particularly in Relation to a ſolemn and decent Uſe of *Church Muſic.*

Which *Three* Points being made out, IV.
I ſhall cloſe with a *Fourth*; wherein I ſhall briefly, but earneſtly exhort you, to make your Devotion *exemplary*, in Proportion to thoſe Advantages, which you above all others enjoy.

Firſt, I am to ſhew you, that the I.
great Thing which recommends our public Devotions to God, is, our performing them with an awakened, fixed, and lively Attention of Mind.

Our Worſhip is compoſed, as we ourſelves are, of a *Body*, and a *Soul*: the *Body* is the outward ceremonious Part; the Devotion of the Lips, of the Hands, and of the Knees, all that lies open to the Senſe and Obſervation of others; but the *Life and Soul* of the Duty conſiſts in thoſe inward Acts

of

SERM. IX. of Adoration and Love, Interceſſion and Thankſgiving, Submiſſion and Truſt, whereof *God*, and *we* ourſelves only are conſcious. This *unſeen* Homage is that, which animates and ſanctifies what is *viſible*; and without this, all the *outward* Shew, and Form of Devotion, is of no Acceptance, no Value; a lifeleſs and an uſeleſs Performance.

Indeed under the *Jewiſh* Diſpenſation a Regard was had to the mere *Externals* of Religion: From a groſs and carnal People tied down to earthly Expectations and ſenſible Objects, God was pleaſed, in ſome meaſure, to accept a groſs and carnal Service, and to hinder them by that Means, from falling into downright *Idolatry*, a mighty Propenſion to which they had contracted during their Stay in *Egypt*. They were to be diſtinguiſhed and kept ſeparate from all other Nations, by a peculiar Body of Rites and Ceremonies; and theſe Rites and Ceremonies therefore being uſeful to this End, derived ſome Value alſo from it; eſpecially, being

being all of them ſuch, as had a typical Reference to more vital and ſubſtantial Duties, and were *Shadows* and Emblems *of good Things to come:* The Virtue of which, they, by the divine Appointment, did not only repreſent, but impart alſo to ſuch as performed them. But this typical State being at an end, a more pure and perfect Inſtitution ſucceeded; a more refined and ſpiritual Worſhip was ſet up, in which the Mind *is* all, and *does* all; and in which *outward* Obſervances have no otherwiſe a Place, than as they ſerve, either to teſtify the *inward* Affections of our Hearts to *others*, or to excite and improve them in *ourſelves*. A Worſhip every way proportioned to the Nature of *God*, who is to *receive* it; and to the Nature of *Man*, who is to *pay* it; and to the *End* and *Uſe* alſo of ſuch religious Duties, which is, not merely to expreſs our Homage to God, or to procure a Return from him; but alſo to work in our Minds all thoſe good Diſpoſitions and Graces, which we

SERM. IX.

SERM. IX. we are ſo earneſt to obtain; and to be at once a neceſſary *Condition*, and a proper and natural Means alſo of ſpiritual Improvement. And this is remarkably the Caſe of *ſuch* Prayers as are put up with Application of Mind, with Zeal and Fervency: Our very aſking in ſuch a *manner* fits and qualifies us for receiving; makes us reſigned, ſubmiſſive, dependent; affects us with a deep Senſe of our own Inſufficiency and Unworthineſs, and of the divine Bounty and Goodneſs; ſuſpends the evil Motions and Deſires of our Hearts for a Time, and puts us every Way into that holy and humble Frame of Mind, which God delights in, and delights to reward.

A great deal more might be ſaid, to ſhew, how requiſite it is, to approach God in his Worſhip, with an awakened, fixed, and lively Attention of Soul; if either *this* were a *Point*, which any good and pious Man doubted of, or were intended to be dwelt on in this Diſcourſe any further, than as it leads the

the Way to *thoſe* which follow. The next of which is,

Secondly, That therefore all ſuch pious Helps and Expedients as conduce to this great End, are to be laid hold of; particularly thoſe which the Text points out to us, *Vocal* and *Inſtrumental* Harmony. The Uſe of *theſe* in Divine Service, I ſhall now recommend and juſtify, from this Conſideration: That they do, when wiſely employed and managed, contribute extremely to awaken the Attention, and enliven the Devotion of all ſerious and ſincere *Chriſtians*.

And their Uſefulneſs to this End will appear on a double Account, both as they remove the ordinary *Hinderances* of Devotion, and as they ſupply us further with ſpecial *Helps and Advantages* towards quickening and improving it.

By the melodious Harmony of the Church, the ordinary *Hinderances* of Devotion are removed, particularly theſe *three*: That *Engagement* of Thought,

SERM. IX. which we often bring with us into the Church from what we laſt converſed with; thoſe *accidental Diſtractions*, that may happen to us during the Courſe of Divine Service; and that *Wearineſs* and *Flatneſs* of Mind, which ſome *weak* Tempers may labour under, by reaſon even of the *Length* of it.

When we come into the Sanctuary immediately from any worldly Affair (as our very Condition of Life does, alas! force many of us to do) we come uſually with divided and alienated Minds. The Buſineſs, the Pleaſure, or the Amuſement we left, ſticks faſt to us; and perhaps engroſſes that Heart for a Time, which ſhould then be taken up altogether in ſpiritual Addreſſes. But as ſoon as the Sound of the ſacred Hymns ſtrike us, all that buſy Swarm of Thoughts preſently diſperſes: By a grateful Violence we are forced into the Duty that is going forward, and, as indevout and backward as we were before,

before, find ourſelves on the ſudden ſeized with a ſacred Warmth, and ready to cry out with holy *David*; *My Heart is fixed, O God, my Heart is fixed! I will ſing, and give Praiſe.* Our Miſapplication of Mind, at ſuch Times, is often ſo great, and we ſo deeply immerſed in it, that there needs ſome very ſtrong and powerful Charm to rouſe us from it; and perhaps nothing is of greater Force to this Purpoſe, than the ſolemn and awakening Airs of *Church Muſic.* SERM. IX.

For the ſame Reaſon, thoſe *accidental Diſtractions* that may happen to us, during the Courſe of the Service, are alſo beſt cured by it. The *ſtrongeſt* Minds, and beſt practiſed in holy Duties, may ſometimes be ſurpriſed into a Forgetfulneſs of what they are about, by ſome violent outward Impreſſions; and every ſlight Occaſion will ſerve to call off the Thoughts of no leſs willing, though much *weaker* Worſhipers. Thoſe that come to *ſee* and to be *ſeen* here, will often gain

SERM. IX.

their Point, will draw and detain for a while the Eyes of the Curious, or the Unwary. A *Paſſage* in the ſacred Story read, an Expreſſion uſed in the common Forms of Devotion, ſhall raiſe a *foreign* Reflexion perhaps in muſing and ſpeculative Minds, and lead them on from Thought to Thought, and Point to Point, till they are bewildered in their own Imagination. *Theſe*, and an Hundred *other* Avocations will ariſe, and prevail; but when the *Inſtruments* of Praiſe begin to ſound, our *ſcattered* Thoughts preſently take the Alarm, return to their Poſt, and to their Duty, preparing and arming themſelves againſt their ſpiritual *Aſſailants*.

Laſtly, Even the *Length* of the Service itſelf becomes an *Hinderance* ſometimes to the Devotion, which it was meant to feed and raiſe: For, alas! we quickly tire in the Performance of holy Duties; and as eager and unwearied as we are in attending upon *ſecular* Buſineſs, and trifling Concerns,

cerns, yet in *divine* Offices, I fear, the Expoſtulation of our Saviour is applicable to moſt of us: *What! can ye not watch with me one Hour? This Infirmity* is relieved, this *Hinderance* prevented or removed, by the ſweet *Harmony* that accompanies ſeveral Parts of the Service, and, returning upon us at fit *Intervals*, keeps our Attention up to the Duty, when we begin to flag, and makes us inſenſible of the *Length* of it. Happily therefore, and wiſely is it ſo ordered, that the Morning Devotions of the Church, which are much the longeſt, ſhould ſhare alſo a greater Proportion of the *Harmony* which is ſo *uſeful* to enliven them. SERM. IX.

But its *Uſe* ſtops not here, at a bare Removal of ſome of the ordinary *Impediments* to Devotion; it ſupplies us alſo with ſpecial *Helps* and *Advantages* towards furthering and improving it. For it adds *Dignity* and *Solemnity* to the public Worſhip; it ſweetly influences and raiſes our *Paſſions*, while we aſſiſt at it; and makes us do our Duty

SERM. IX. with the greateſt *Pleaſure* and *Chearfulneſs*; all which are very proper and powerful Means, towards creating in us that holy Attention and Erection of Mind, which I have ſhewn to be the moſt reaſonable Part of this our reaſonable Service.

Such is our Nature, that even the beſt Things, and moſt worthy of our Eſteem, do not always employ and detain our Thoughts, in Proportion to their real Value, unleſs they be ſet off and greatened by ſome outward Circumſtances, which are fitted to raiſe Admiration and Surpriſe in the Breaſts of thoſe who hear, or behold them. And this good Effect is wrought in us by the Power of *Sacred Muſic*. To *it* we, in good Meaſure, owe the Dignity and ſolemnity of our *public Worſhip*; which elſe, I fear, in its *natural* Simplicity and Plainneſs, would not ſo ſtrongly ſtrike, or ſo deeply affect the Minds, as it ought to do, of the Sluggiſh and Inattentive, that is, of the far greateſt Part of Mankind. But when

Voices

Voices and *Inſtruments* are ſkilfully adapted to it, it appears to us in a majeſtic Air and Shape, and gives us very awful and reverent Impreſſions; which, while they are upon us, it is impoſſible for us not to be fixed and compoſed to the utmoſt. We are then in the ſame State of Mind, that the devout Patriarch was, when he awoke from his holy Dream: and ready with him to ſay to ourſelves: *Surely the Lord is in this Place, and I knew it not. How dreadful is this Place! This is none other but the Houſe of God, and this is the Gate of Heaven.* Gen. xxviii. 17.

SERM. IX.

Further; the *Availableneſs* of Harmony to promote a pious Diſpoſition of Mind will appear, from the great Influence it naturally has on the *Paſſions*, which, when well directed and rightly applied, are the Wings and Sails of the Mind, that ſpeed its Paſſage to Perfection, and are of particular and remarkable Uſe in the Offices of *Devotion*: For *Devotion* conſiſts in an Aſcent of the Mind towards *God*,

SERM. IX. attended with holy Breathings of Soul, and a divine Exerciſe of all the *Paſſions* and *Powers* of the Mind. Theſe *Paſſions* the Melody of Sounds ſerves only to guide and elevate towards their proper Object: *Theſe* it *firſt* calls forth, and encourages, and *then* gradually raiſes and inflames. This it does to *all* of them, as the *Matter* of the Hymns ſung gives an Occaſion for the employing them; but the Power of it is chiefly ſeen in advancing that moſt heavenly Paſſion of *Love*, which reigns always in *pious* Breaſts, and is the ſureſt and moſt inſeparable Mark of true Devotion; which recommends what we do in Virtue of it to *God*, and makes it reliſhing to *ourſelves*; and without which, all our ſpiritual Offerings, our Prayers and our Praiſes, are both inſipid and unacceptable. At this our Religion *begins*, and at this it *ends*; it is the ſweeteſt Companion and Improvement of it here upon *Earth*, and the very Earneſt and Foretaſte of *Heaven*: Of the Pleaſures of which nothing

thing further is revealed to us, than that they conſiſt in the Practice of *Holy Muſic*, and *Holy Love*; the joint Enjoyment of *which* (we are told) is to be the happy Lot of all pious Souls to endleſs Ages. And obſervable therefore it is, that *that Apoſtle*, in whoſe Breaſt this divine Quality ſeems moſt to have abounded, has alſo ſpoken the moſt advantageouſly of *Vocal* and *Inſtrumental* Harmony, and afforded us the beſt Argument for the lawful Uſe of it: For ſuch I account the Deſcription, which he has given us of the Devotions of Angels and bleſſed Spirits performed by *Harps* and *Hymns* in the *Apocalypſe*. A Deſcription which, whether real or metaphorical, yet, belonging to the Evangelical State, certainly implies thus much, that whatever is there ſaid to be made uſe of, may now, under the Goſpel, be warrantably and laudably employed. SERM. IX.

And in his Steps trod the holy Martyr *Ignatius*, who, probably, ſaw Saint *John* in the Fleſh, and learnt that Leſſon

SERM. IX. Leſſon of divine Love from him, which, after his Example, he inculcated every where in his *Epiſtles*; and together with it inſtils into the Churches he writes to, a Love of *Holy Harmony*, by frequent Alluſions and Compariſons drawn from that Science, which recur oftner in his Writings, than in thoſe of any other Ancient whatever, and ſeem to intimate to us, that the Devotions of the Church were ſet off with ſome kind of *Melody*, even in thoſe *early* Times, notwithſtanding we uſually place the Riſe of the Inſtitution much lower.

Would we then have *Love* at theſe Aſſemblies? Would we have our Spirit ſoftened and enlarged, and made fit for the Illapſes of the Divine Spirit? Let us, as often as we can, call in to our Aid the Aſſiſtances of *Muſic*, to work us up into this *heavenly* Temper. All Selfiſhneſs and Narrowneſs of Mind, all Rancor and Peeviſhneſs vaniſh from the Heart, where the Love of *Divine Harmony* dwells; *as the evil Spirit of*

1 Sam. xvi. 23.

Saul

Saul retired before the *Harp of David.* The *Devotional,* as well as the *Active* Part of Religion is (we know) founded in *good Nature*; and one of the beſt Signs and Cauſes of good Nature is, I am ſure, to delight in ſuch *pious* Entertainments. SERM. IX.

And now it naturally follows from hence (which was the *laſt Advantage,* from whence I propoſed to recommend the Uſe of *Church Muſic)* that it makes our *Duty* a *Pleaſure,* and enables us, by that Means, to perform it, with the utmoſt Vigour and Chearfulneſs. It is certain, that the more pleaſing an Action is to us, the more keenly and eagerly are we uſed to employ ourſelves in it, the leſs liable are we, while it is going forward, to tire, and droop, and be diſpirited. So that whatever contributes to make our Devotion *taking* (within ſuch a Degree as not at the ſame time to diſſipate and diſtract it) does, for that very Reaſon, contribute to our Attention and holy Warmth of Mind in performing it. What we take De-

light

SERM. IX. light in, we no longer look upon as a Taſk, but return to always with Deſire, dwell upon with Satisfaction, and quit with Uneaſineſs. And this it was which made holy *David* expreſs himſelf in ſo pathetical a Manner concerning the Ser-

Pſ. xlii. 1, 2. vice of the *Sanctuary*: *As the Hart panteth after the Water-Brooks* (ſays he) *ſo panteth my Soul after thee, O God. My Soul is athirſt for God, yea even for the living God. When, O when ſhall I come to appear before the Preſence of God?* Which paſſionate Wiſh, as it certainly proceeded from the *Pleaſure* he took in reflecting on thoſe holy *Offices*, ſo, I queſtion not, but a good Part of that Pleaſure aroſe from the ſacred *Melody* which accompanied them. For ſo he himſelf inſtructs us to think of him in many other Paſſages of the *Pſalms*; particularly where he breaks out into this

Pſ. lxviii. 24, 25. pious Exultation: *It is well ſeen, O my God, how thou goeſt, how thou my God and King goeſt in the Sanctuary: The Singers go before, the Minſtrels follow after; in the Midſt are the Damſels playing with the Timbrels.*

Timbrels. And if the Image of that *holy Quire*, now only preſent to his *Memory*, gave him ſo much Pleaſure, what Tranſports do we think he was under, when he himſelf *aſſiſted* at the Service, and his Ears drank in their holy Strains? SERM. IX.

And the ſame may we obſerve to be the Caſe, as to ſome of the *Fathers* of the firſt Rank, St. *Chryſoſtom*, St. *Auſtin*, and St. *Baſil*: As *Eloquent* as they naturally were, yet they never appear *ſo* Eloquent, never put on ſuch a Variety of Thought and Expreſſion, ſuch an Elevation of Soul and Style, as when they are diſcourſing of the Energy and Power of *Church Muſic*. Could I produce to you the Paſſages from them to this Purpoſe at length, you would ſay, that Men who ſpake thus feelingly, and with ſo much Extacy, of the holy Hymns and Anthems of the Church, when they were at a *Diſtance* from them, muſt have an Heaven almoſt in their Breaſts, when they *partook* of them. If *therefore* the Praiſes of God, tunefully performed, be naturally attended with

SERM. IX. an holy *Pleaſure*, that Pleaſure, I ſay, muſt needs produce *Attention*; actuate all the Springs, and enliven all the Motions of Devout and Heavenly, nay even of Earthly, and Sluggiſh Minds. The Ancients do ſometimes uſe the Metaphor of an *Army*, when they are ſpeaking of the *joint* Devotions put up to God in the Aſſembly of his Saints: They ſay, we there meet together in *Troops* to do Violence to *Heaven*; that we encompaſs, we beſiege the *Throne* of God, and bring ſuch an united Force, as is not to be withſtood. And, I ſuppoſe, we may as innocently carry on the Metaphor, as they have begun it, and ſay, that *Church Muſic*, when decently ordered, may have as great Uſes in *this Army of Supplicants*, as the Sound of the *Trumpet* has among the *Hoſts of the mighty Men!* It equally rouſes the Courage, equally gives Life, and Vigour, and Reſolution, and Unanimity to theſe *holy Aſſailants*.

Thus have I ſhewn you, in how many ſeveral Reſpects *Vocal* and *Inſtrumental Harmony* may be ſerviceable to

to *awaken*, *fix*, and *inflame* us in our public Addreſſes to God; and how far therefore it recommends itſelf to the Approbation and Uſe of all pious *Chriſtians*, upon this ſingle Conſideration: So that, though the Worſhip now under the Goſpel be *Spiritual*, yet are we not debarred, on that Account, from employing *ſeveral Means* and *Inſtruments* of Worſhip, which are *not* ſo. On the contrary from the *Spiritual Nature* of our Worſhip, it follows, that all ſuch *outward* Helps and Expedients may and ought to be laid hold of, as do really aſſiſt and promote the *inward* Worſhip of our Spirits. And for this Reaſon therefore, among others, the melodious Harmony now practiſed in *our* Church ought to be continued.

SERM. IX.

'Till then our Brethren of the *Separation* can prove, either that *Muſic* has not that *Influence* on the Mind of Man, as it has been repreſented to have; or that the Minds of *us Chriſtians* are not ſo diſpoſed to receive its Impreſſions,

SERM. IX. preſſions, as thoſe of *other* Men; that we have not the *ſame* Faculties to be wrought upon, the *ſame* Paſſions to be regulated, the *ſame* Dulneſs and Diſtraction of Mind, to be cured; 'till this can be made out by *them*, they muſt allow us to retain thoſe *Modes* of Worſhip, which *We* and our *Forefathers*, from the Infancy of the *Reformation* down to this Day, have practiſed; to our great Spiritual Comfort: *Modes* of Worſhip, which *They* perhaps, who ſtand aloof from them, may think (and Gal. iv. 9. call ſometimes) *Rudiments of the Law, and weak and beggarly Elements*; but which *We*, by Experience, find and feel to be very ſtrong and powerful *Incentives to Godlineſs*.

If *Abuſes* now and then creep into *this* Part of our Worſhip, *They* ſhall not be more ready to point them out, than *We* will be to own and reform them. If ſome ſlight *Inconveniences* may happen to have ariſen from hence, which ſeem to blemiſh the Performance of our Religious Service, far be

it

it from us either to cheriſh, or defend them. The very beſt Things are liable to be miſuſed; and the better the Thing, oftentimes the more liable it is to it. However we doubt not, but that, upon a fair Balance of Profit and Loſs, it will appear, that the few *Inconveniences pretended* to have ariſen from hence, are not to be compared with the many and mighty *Advantages*, that have certainly ſprung from it; and that if *one* good Man has been thrown *back* in his Devotions, *Hundreds and Thouſands* have been extremely *forwarded* by it. SERM. IX.

And this is what I ſhould now more particularly endeavour to prove under my

Third general Head, wherein I propoſed to ſhew, that the *Way* of performing divine Service in the *Church of England* is better fitted to fix our *Attentions*, and raiſe our *Affections*, than any *other* Form of Devotions now practiſed in the *Chriſtian World**: That III.

* See the preceding Diſcourſe on this Subject.

SERM. IX. it enjoys this Advantage, as in ſeveral other Reſpects, ſo particularly in relation to a ſolemn and decent Uſe of *Church Muſic*. But the greateſt Part of the Matter that would ariſe on this Head, is foreign to the Deſign of the Day; and what is not ſo, has in Part been prevented already; and neither of them can now be inſiſted upon, without depriving you too long of a better and more ſenſible Conviction of the Power of Church Muſic, than any I can ſupply you with. I ſhall therefore take this whole Point for granted; and from thence, in the

IV. *Fourth* and laſt Place, very briefly, but earneſtly exhort you to make your Devotion *Exemplary* in Proportion to thoſe *Advantages*, which *you* above all *others* enjoy. In vain will it be for us to boaſt, that we have extraordinary Helps to inward Piety, if our outward Behaviour plainly declares, that we do not make a due Uſe of them. In vain ſhall we hope to convince thoſe that

that *differ* from us, of the Decency and Expedience of *this* Part of our Worſhip, and of its great Tendency to ſpiritual Edification; if they ſee that it does not really produce thoſe good Effects in us which we aſcribe to it: Let us reaſon never ſo well in this Caſe, they will think they have anſwered our *Arguments*, if they can but confront them with our *Practices*. Let us take away the Strength of *this* Objection, as well as we can that of all the *reſt*; and then, I am ſure, our Devotions will be altogether blameleſs. O let all of us, that have any regard for the Honour of that Church, to which we belong, any Zeal for the true Intereſts of Piety, any real Concern of Heart on the Account of thoſe little Niceties, and endleſs Scruples that thus unhappily divide us; O let all of us, I ſay, that are thus affected and diſpoſed (as all of us, I am ſure, *ſhould* be) reſolve, from this Moment, ſo to order our external Deportment in the Houſe of God, as may beſt enable SERM. IX.

SERM. IX.

it to reach thoſe excellent Ends! Let no light and vain *Motion*, no looſe and unſeemly *Geſtures* be ſeen upon any of us, when we appear in this great Preſence! Let our Ears then liſten to nothing, but to the ſolemn Offerings of Prayer and Praiſe that are then put up, and liſten to them with no other Deſign, but to affect our Souls with a deep Senſe of them. Let not our *Eyes* lead the Way to our naughty *Hearts*, and teach them to wander! But let us be all compoſed throughout into Attention, and awed into a religious Reſpect and Silence.

To the Sound of *Words*, and the Significancy of *Geſtures*, let us join all along the ſweet Melody of our *Hearts*; compleating the holy *Concert*, we aſſiſt at, by a divine *Agreement of Mind* and *Body*, in the ſame Acts of Adoration, and by making *all* our Worſhip, both *inward* and *outward*, exactly *harmonious*, and of a Piece! So ſhall we take away every reproach that ſhall be caſt upon our Communion: So ſhall we win

win the Hearts, and convince the Judg- SERM.
ments of thoſe that differ from us: So IX.
ſhall we thoroughly recommend our
Worſhip to God, and *ourſelves* by the
Means of it. In a Word, ſo ſhall we
make the Devotions of this our Church
Militant here on *Earth*, the lively
Image of thoſe of the Church *Triumphant* in *Heaven*.

To a bleſſed Participation of which, may God of his infinite Mercy bring us, &c.

Of Anxiety and Solicitude.

A SERMON

Preached at

Weſtminſter-Abbey,

March 13, 1714-15.

MATTH. vi. 34.

—*Take no Thought for the Morrow.*

SERM. X.

THIS is Part of our Saviour's Sermon on the Mount; wherein he propoſed a ſhort Sum of *Chriſtian* Doctrine, in Oppoſition to the falſe Maxims, and corrupt Notions of *Morality*, that then obtained in the World.

SERM. X.

And indeed, all the Precepts he there laid down, though highly reaſonable in themſelves, were yet ſo diſtant from the common Opinions and Practice of the *Jews*, that we are not to wonder, if (as St. *Matthew* informs us) *when he had ended theſe Sayings, the Multitude was aſtoniſhed at his Doctrine:* For they had heard nothing *like* it from their Teachers, the *Scribes* and *Phariſees*. And, perhaps, no one Branch of it was more ſurpriſing to that worldly minded People, immerſed deeply in the Cares of Life, and in a reſtleſs Concern for Earthly Things, than the Rule given by him in the Text:— *Take no Thought for the Morrow.* A Rule, which even to *Chriſtian* Ears may ſeem ſomewhat harſh at firſt Hearing; and will, therefore, deſerve to be a little *explained*, in order to its becoming a ſure Foundation of *Duty*, and the proper Subject of thoſe *Reaſonings* and *Exhortations*, with which I propoſe to enforce it.

Matt. vii. 28.

—*Take*

—*Take no Thought for the Morrow.* SERM. X.

The Meaning of our Saviour in theſe Words, cannot be, that we are to live at Random, ſecure and careleſs of whatever may befall us; that we are not to look into the Conſequences of our own, or other Men's Actions, nor endeavour any ways to foreſee, and prevent approaching Dangers: That we are to make no manner of Proviſion for future Events, to lay up nothing, and concern ourſelves about nothing, but what is preſent, and immediately before us: For this is no Part of the Character either of a *Wiſe* or *Good* Man, nor agreeable to many *other* Rules and Directions given us in holy Scripture. Doubtleſs, Sagacity in diſcerning, and a prudent Forecaſt towards declining Evils, are not only allowable, but commendable Qualities: Frugality and Diligence are certainly Virtues: And therefore the *prudent Man* is thus deſcribed by *Solomon*, that *he foreſeeth the Evil, and hideth himſelf:* Prov. xxii. 3.

SERM. X.

himſelf: And the Ant is recommended to us, as a Pattern of Providence and Parſimony; *Go to the Ant, thou Sluggard, conſider her Ways, and be wiſe.* Even our Saviour had a *Bag*, wherein there was probably a Supply for more than *one* Day. And as he allows us to foreſee Perſecutions at a Diſtance, and to eſcape them by an early Flight; ſo he himſelf took that Method of declining them, and cannot therefore be ſuppoſed to condemn what he frequently practiſed. But his Meaning plainly is, to forbid *ſuch* a Care and Concern for future Accidents, as is attended with *Uneaſineſs*, *Diſtruſt*, and *Deſpondency*; *ſuch* a Degree of *Thoughtfulneſs*, as takes up, and dejects, and diſtracts the Mind. We are not too curiouſly to pry into the remote Iſſues of Things, nor to perplex and afflict ourſelves with the Forethought of imagined Dangers. We are not to guard againſt Want, by an eager anxious Purſuit of Wealth, nor be ſo careful in providing ſupplies for the Neceſſities

Prov. vi. 6.

of

of *this* Life, as to forget that we are designed for *another*. In *this* Senſe we are obliged *to take no Thought for the Morrow.* And indeed this is the Senſe which the *Original* naturally carries: For what our Verſion renders by *taking Thought*, is in the *Greek*, a Word of much greater Force and Compaſs, ſignifying a reſtleſs Solicitude, and Diſtraction of Thought; and by the *Morrow*, is not meant the *very next* Day only, but, according to the Import of the *Eaſtern* Phraſe, *all* the Time to come, *any* future Event, at what Diſtance ſoever. The Deſign of the Text therefore is, to prohibit all anxious and perplexing Cares; whether as to the good Things of Life, the Neceſſaries and firſt Conveniencies of it, how we ſhall be furniſhed with them; or, whether as to the *ill* Things, the poſſible *Dangers*, and diſtant *Evils* of Life, how we ſhall bear them: A Diſeaſe very incident to good and virtuous Minds, when they happen to be a little tinctured with Melancholy; and very

SERM. XI.

SERM. X.

very apt, where it gets Poſſeſſion, to poiſon all the Enjoyments of Life, and even to make Life itſelf ſometimes a Burthen to the Owner. It has been known, when an exceſſive Love of ſome earthly Good [as perhaps of a near and dear *Relation* or *Friend*] has in tender Tempers raiſed ſuch a Dread of loſing that Happineſs, as hath been more than equal to the Pleaſure they took in enjoying it. And there have been Inſtances of thoſe, who, under all the Affluence and Plenty in the World, have fancied to themſelves ſome Accident, that might rob them at once of all they poſſeſſed; and have by ſuch an *imaginary* Scene made themſelves as truly miſerable, as if it were *real*. Nor is it an unuſual Thing for Men to be influenced ſo far, by Reflexions on ſuch *poſſible* Accidents as theſe, as to ſhut up their Hands and their Bowels to the Poor, and to think themſelves excuſed from relieving other Men's Wants, leſt they themſelves ſhould one Day want what they are

are invited to beſtow. However, ſhould SERM.
ſome of theſe be thought *rare* Caſes, X.
yet nothing is more *common*, than to ſee Men, who are at Eaſe, diſquieting themſelves with remote Proſpects, and with the vain Fear of future Evils: Eſpecially if they live in doubtful and diſtracted Times, when the Spirit of Diſſenſion reigns openly, and Parties of Men are loud and violent againſt each other: Then they ſink under the ſad View of Things, and are ever ſcaring themſelves with the Forethought of the very worſt, that can befal Themſelves or Others, particular Families or Cities, Churches or Kingdoms. To *theſe* (and to all ſuch as theſe) we may preſume that our Bleſſed Lord directs the Precept of the Text —— *Take no Thought for the Morrow.*

It ſhall be my Buſineſs to ſhew both the *Evil*, and the *Unreaſonableneſs* of ſuch *Anxious Thoughts*; and how little they are to be juſtified, either in Point of *Piety* or *Prudence*.

Firſt,

SERM. X.

First, The *Evil* of them lies in *these* Particulars: That they are oppoſite to ſeveral plain *Precepts* of holy Writ; That they often *invade* the peculiar *Province* and *Prerogative* of God, and are always built on a ſecret *Diſtruſt* of his *Providence*.

Several expreſs *Commands* there are in Scripture of the ſame Import with
Phil. iv. 6. that of the Text: *Be careful for nothing* (ſays St. *Paul*) *but in every Thing, by Prayer and Supplication, with Thankſgiving, let your Requeſts be made known unto God. Caſt all*
1 Pet. v. 7. *your Care upon him* (ſays St. *Peter*) *for he careth for you. Commit thy Way*
Pſ. xxxvii. 5. *unto the Lord* (ſays good *David*) *truſt in him, and he ſhall bring it to paſs.* Can a Man tranſgreſs theſe Commands, without Guilt; or entertain any Degree of Anxiety, without tranſgreſſing them?

Indeed, when we indulge ourſelves *too far* in theſe melancholy Preſages, and pretend to ſee a great way off the Evils

Evils that ſhall happen to us, we are guilty of *Impiety* on another Account; inaſmuch as we proudly and arrogantly pretend to what doth not lie within the Compaſs of our Knowledge, and affect to partake with the Almighty in one of his great Attributes. *Secret Things belong unto the Lord our God:* *He* alone, who orders and diſpoſes Futurities, can foreſee them at a *Diſtance:* But Man is a ſhort-ſighted and blind Creature; and never more blind, than when he pretends to ſee furtheſt, and to ſet up for *Propheſying.* It is the kind Deſign of God, to wrap up Things to come in Clouds and Darkneſs, leſt we ſhould arrive at the Knowledge of that, which, when known, would certainly trouble us. The Scheme of ſucceſſive Angry Providences, by which God *muſt* govern a wicked World, would be ſo terrible and amazing a Sight, that, in Pity to us, God has ſhortened and bounded our View. And what Madneſs, what Wickedneſs is it then, to pry curiouſly into

SERM. X.

Deut. xxix. 29.

SERM. X. into thoſe *Arcana* of Providence, which we can never find out, and which were hidden from us, on purpoſe that we might not find them out! *Secret Things belong unto the Lord our God; but thoſe that are revealed, belong unto us and to our Children:* And one of theſe revealed Truths is, the wiſe Aphoriſm of the Text, *Take no Thought for the Morrow.*

That ſuch *Anxiety* is *Irreligious*, will further appear, if we conſider it as built always on a ſecret *Diſtruſt* of God's *Goodneſs* towards us, and perpetual *Watchfulneſs* over us. It hath indeed ſomewhat of the Nature of *Infidelity*; and therefore our Saviour applies himſelf to thoſe who give way to it, under *this* Compellation: *O ye of little Faith!* Did we repoſe an entire Confidence in God; were we thoroughly perſuaded, that he is as ready, as he is able, to do every Thing that is needful for us, and that, with out his Permiſſion and Appointment, no Snare can entrap us, no Calamity

can

can cruſh us, no Evil can approach to hurt us; had we always upon our Minds, I ſay, a deep and lively Senſe of theſe Truths, it were impoſſible that a Concern for future Events ſhould much diſquiet us; we ſhould certainly, according to the Advice of St. *Peter*, *caſt our Care upon God*, if we in good Earneſt believed, that he *cared for us*. I do not ſay, that ſuch a Perſuaſion would render us indifferent to all Events, and wholly unconcerned at the probable Approach of impending Dangers; but it would in good Meaſure take off the *Edge* and *Sting* of our Forebodings; it would compoſe and calm us into a patient Reſignation of ourſelves to the Divine Will and Appointment; it would make us hope the beſt, that there is room to hope in every Caſe, and expect the worſt that could happen with Tranquillity and Evenneſs. SERM. X.

By the Light of Nature we learn, God is infinitely wiſe and good: And what greater Security can we have, than to be under the Protection of infinite Wiſdom and Goodneſs? Ought we in

SERM. X.

reaſon to diſturb ourſelves with an eager Deſire of poſſeſſing what infinite Goodneſs ſhall be pleaſed to lay upon us? Do we not know, and feel, that we depend upon God, *originally*, for what we *are*, and *every Moment* for his continued Preſervation? That in him we *live*, *move*, *and have our Being?* And can we doubt, whether he, who gave us the greater Gift, *Being* itſelf, will afford us the Leſs, whatever is abſolutely requiſite to our *Well-being?* The Argument is our Saviour's—*Take no Thought* (ſays he) *for your Life, what ye ſhall eat; nor yet for your Body, what ye ſhall put on: Is not the Life more than Meat, and the Body than Rayment?*

Acts xvii. 28.

Matt. vi. 25.

The ſame plain Leſſon we learn alſo from the Obſervation of God's perpetual Care and Providence over the ſeveral Ranks of *lower* and *leſs* noble Creatures; over the *Birds* of the Air, and the *Beaſts* of the Field, and the very *Plants* that flouriſh on the Face of the Earth. *Theſe all wait upon him, who giveth him their Meat in due Seaſon.* He feeds them within, and he clothes them without, either

Pſ. civ. 27.

either uſefully, or ſpendidly, as ſeemeth beſt to him: His overflowing Bounty ſupplies them with whatever is ſuitable to their Natures and Wants: *He openeth his Hands, and filleth all Things living with Good.* And ſhall he, who provides thus liberally for *inferior* Beings, neglect *any Ways* to take care of *Man*, the Heir of all his Bleſſings, and Lord of the Creation? Thus hath the ſame divine Preacher, with admirable *Simplicity* and *Force*, argued in the ſame Chapter: *Conſider the Fowls of the Air* (ſays he) *for they ſow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into Barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them: Are ye not much better then they? And why take ye Thought for Rayment? Conſider the Lillies of the Field, how they grow: They toil not, neither do they ſpin; and yet I ſay unto you, that Solomon, in all his Glory, was not arrayed like one of theſe. Wherefore if God ſo clothe the Graſs of the Field, which To-day is, and To-morrow is caſt into the Oven, ſhall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little Faith?*

SERM. X.

Matt. vi. 26.

Ver. 28, 29, 30.

SERM. X. But I forbear to enlarge further on *this* Point, that I may have room for thoſe Conſiderations that belong to my

II. *Second general Head*; under which I propoſed to ſhew, that an anxious Concern for To-morrow, is as deſtitute of all Pretences to *Wiſdom* as *Goodneſs*.

A Cenſure, that will not eaſily be allowed! ſince the looking forward to the probable Events of Things hath been ever eſteemed one of the firſt and chiefeſt Inſtances of *Prudence*. It hath ſo, and with good Reaſon; when that Sagacity is employed in a proper *Manner*, and within its due *Bounds*; when it gives the Mind a calm and clear Foreſight of the Difficulties it is likely to meet with, and leaves it at Liberty, under that View, to prepare itſelf every way for the Encounter: But when it ſerves only to diſarm us of our Courage, and to deprive us of our Reaſon; to create Vexations to us, and to multiply Dangers; it is then the very *Folly*

of

of Fooliſhneſs, as may appear from the enſuing Reflections. For, SERM. X.

1. The Taſk we ſet ourſelves in this Caſe, is infinite and endleſs. And after all will not anſwer the *Deſign*, for which it is intended. He, who makes uncertain *May-be's* the Object of his Concern, has taken Care to ſupply his Mind with perpetual Matter of Diſquiet; has pitched upon a fruitful Subject of Uneaſineſs, which can never be exhauſted. The poſſible Evils and Calamities of Life are without Number; and in vain therefore ſhould we attempt to reckon them up: Or, could we number them, it would be a ſtill vainer Attempt, to forecaſt with ourſelves particularly how we might avoid them: Which yet is perhaps the only wiſe Reaſon that can be given for our muſing much upon them. Did the Affairs of this World proceed in an even and regular Courſe, ſo that we might eaſily trace Effects from their Cauſes, and judge ſurely of the *future* by the *preſent*; it might be reaſon-

SERM. X. able and prudent often to employ our Thoughts and Concern on Times and Things at a Diſtance, and *endeavour* to foreſee, what were *poſſible* to be foreſeen, in order to make the wiſeſt Uſe and Advantages of it. But alas! we have no ſure Clue to guide us in ſuch Searches as theſe: The *Events* of Life are to the utmoſt Degree *uncertain*, and depend often on ſuch *ſecret* Springs and Motions, as lie without the Reach of our Obſervation; and therefore fall out often ſo croſly, and ſo contrary to common Rules, that it is but loſt Labour to draw long Schemes before hand, and form nice Conjectures upon them. *I returned and ſaw under the Sun* (ſays a very experienced Obſerver) *that the Race is not to be Swift, nor the Battle to the Strong, neither yet Riches to Men of Underſtanding, nor yet Favour to Men of Skill; but Time and Chance happeneth to them all.* There is ſcarce any Man, perhaps, who is not ſenſible, that the greateſt Turns that have happened to him in his Fortunes,

Eccl. ix. 11.

have been owing to ſuch lucky Hits, and to ſuch a Set of conſpiring Circumſtances, as he could not any ways have *foreſeen*, nor can *yet account* for: And *few* there are, I believe, who have not by the ſame happy Co-incidence of Things, without their Foreknowledge, or Care, eſcaped great Dangers. And what therefore is ſo very uncertain, as future Events are, ought not to be the Object of any great Concern or Paſſion. But were it *poſſible* to gueſs at a remote *Event* with ſome Degree of Aſſurance, yet it is *impoſſible* to know, whether *we* ourſelves ſhall live to ſee it. It may happen, as we preſage: But, ere it happens, we may be ſnatched from the World; and that is all one to us, as if it were never to happen at all. And why then ſhould ſuch a *ſhort-liv'd* Thing as *Man*, *lengthen* his Cares to no Purpoſe? Why ſhould a Creature of *to day take Thought for the morrow?* SERM. X.

Either the Evil we fear, will come, or it will not: If it *will*, then the

SERM. X. Saying of our Lord takes Place, *ſufficient for the Day* (that is, for the Day of Viſitation) *is the Evil thereof*: It is *Time* enough to bear it, when it *doth* befall us; but it is unpardonable Folly to invite it to *come and torment us before our Time*; to add *imaginary* to *certain* Afflictions, and to ſuffer a Thing a *thouſand* Times over in our Thoughts, becauſe we muſt *once* ſuffer it in Reality. But if it will *not* come, then our *Fear* of it is our only Evil: And ſurely *ſuch* a Fear is *Vanity and Vexation of Spirit*, in the utmoſt Propriety of the Expreſſion. Anxiety of Mind, therefore, makes us feel a Thouſand Afflictions, which will *never* overtake us, and multiplies thoſe which certainly will. And how can a worſe Character poſſibly be given of any Thing, that ſets up for *Prudence*? Nay,

2. It not only multiplies Evils, but takes away from us the Power either to *eſcape*, or *bear* them; renders us incapable of uſing thoſe *Methods* of

Pre-

Prevention, which are requiſite to ward the Blow, or of ſuffering what we cannot prevent, with Decency and Patience. This is plain, that the worſt Thing in the World to adviſe with, in Caſe of Dangers, preſent or future, is a ſacred Imagination: For that diſturbs and diſorders a Man's Thoughts to ſuch a Degree, that he cannot calmly conſider what is fitteſt to be done, in order to avoid the Thing he fears, and it deprives him alſo of that Preſence and Firmneſs of Mind, which ſhould ſupport him under what is unavoidable. SERM. X.

That very Trembling, and Weakneſs, which proceeds from too quick a Senſe of approaching Danger, takes away from a Man the Uſe of thoſe *Limbs*, which ſhould help him, either to grapple with it, or to decline it.

When thou art afflicting thyſelf therefore, with ſad Omens and Preſages, and applauding thy own *Wiſdom* and *Foreſight* in ſo doing, remember the Deciſion of one, who was certainly *wiſe*, and who has told thee, *that the Fear of Man bringeth* Prov. xxix. 25.

SERM. X. *bringeth a Snare; but he that truſteth in the Lord, ſhall be ſafe.* Again.

3. This Concern for *Futurities* robs us of all the Eaſe and the Advantages, which might ariſe from a proper and diſcreet Uſe of the *preſent* Moment. Certainly, the greateſt Pleaſure, on this Side Heaven, lies in an even and ſerene, a calm, compoſed, and ſteady Mind; that is *inwardly* at Reſt, and, by Conſequence, at leiſure to enjoy all *outward* Comforts; that hopes the beſt, and is prepared for the worſt; enjoys the Preſent, and is not anxiouſly concerned for the Future. Such a Temper of Mind is the greateſt Bleſſing God can beſtow upon a Man, becauſe it gives the Taſte and Reliſh to all other Bleſſings; and therefore the greateſt Folly a Man can be guilty of, is, to part with it upon any Account, and to quit a certain Tranquillity *now*, out of the vain Fear of being robbed of it *ſome time*, or other. Further,

4. 'Tis very *unreaſonable* to diſquiet ourſelves about *diſtant* Evils; it often happen-

happening that the *Preſence* of the Things themſelves, ſuggeſts better Expedients, wiſer and quicker Counſels to us, than all our Wiſdom and Forethought at a Diſtance can do. *The Morrow* (ſays our Lord) *ſhall take Thought for the Things of itſelf*; that is, it ſhall bring along with it a Power and Strength of Mind anſwerable to its Neceſſities, a Frame of Spirit every Way ſuited to our Circumſtances and Occaſions. "Thus "*Sickneſs* (as *one* well obſerves) doth of "itſelf produce in us ſuch a Temper, as "is fitted to that Trial: It makes us af- "fect Privacy and Silence, which con- "duce to our Recovery, and gives us ſuch "a Seriouſneſs, and Readineſs to ſubmit "to good Advice, as is agreeable to the "Dangers that attend it. And thus *Ne- "ceſſity* and *Want* infuſe into the Soul "that Decency of Behaviour, that Care- "fulneſs to watch proper Opportunities, "that Courteſy and Eloquence of Speech, "which no Premeditation can furniſh, "and proves a kind of Inſpiration." Trouble not thyſelf, therefore, about what

SERM. X.

SERM. X. what is to come: For when it is to come, it ſhall either *find*, or *make* thee ready to undergo it: *To-morrow ſhall take Thought for the Things of itſelf*; and why then ſhouldſt thou be at a *needleſs* Expence of *Thought before-hand?*

To theſe ſeveral Accounts of the *Folly* and *Unreaſonableneſs* of anxious and tormenting Cares, give me Leave to add one more, and I have done.

That he, who indulges them, forfeits his Intereſt in the *divine Providence and Protection*; and *that* is a Loſs, for which all the *Wiſdom*, and *Skill*, and *Foreſight* in the World can make no Amends. He that terrifies himſelf with the Apprehenſion of *future* Evils, declares in Effect, that he doth not abſolutely rely upon *God* for his ordering, and diſpoſing them. And he, who doth not abſolutely truſt God with all his Concerns, has no Right to his Protection and Defence, no Reaſon to expect his Support and Aſſiſtance; but is left to work out every Thing, as well as he can, by the Dint of *ſecond* Cauſes, by his own Parts, Policy, and Prudence.

And

And how wretched is his Caſe, who has brought his Affairs to that Paſs, as to be deprived of his beſt and faithfulleſt Counſellor, his moſt kind and potent Friend, and to *live*, as it were, *without God in the World? It is a fearful Thing to fall into the Hands of the living God*, ſays the Apoſtle: And ſurely, *next* to that, it is a fearful Thing to take ourſelves *out* of his Hands, and to exempt ourſelves from his Care; which he is in good Conſtruction ſuppoſed to do, who ſets himſelf with any Degree of *Solicitude to take Thought for the Morrow.* SERM. X. Heb. x. 31.

Let all of us, who are convinced of the Reaſonableneſs of theſe *Speculations*, put them immediately in *Practice!* let us even *To-day, while it is called To-day*, throw off all Anxiety and Concern for *To-Morrow!* If we heartily believe the Doctrine of divine Providence, let us ſhew our *Faith* by our *Works*; let us live, as if we *did* believe it; *Induſtriouſly* indeed, *warily, wiſely*; becauſe by *theſe* Means we are to entitle ourſelves to the Protection of God; but withal, *unconcernedly*,

SERM. X. *cernedly, chearfully, reſignedly,* as knowing, that we are *ſecure* of his Protection when we ſtand in *Need* of it. Let us behave ourſelves like dutiful *Children,* under the Guidance of a wiſe and gracious *Parent,* who, we are ſatisfied, loves us, and will, as he thinks fit, and ſees beſt, provide for us; and therefore we fall into *all* his *Commands and Directions* with an implicit Obedience, and trouble ourſelves with nothing farther, but only to do *the Duty which he hath appointed us,* in our ſeveral Places and Stations. *Let us caſt all our Care upon him, for he careth for us.*

Nay, ſhould he at any Time ſeem to withdraw his *Favour and the Light of his Countenance from us;* ſhould he *bring us into the Pit and the Snare, and lay Trouble upon our Loins,* ſuffer the Malice of our Enemies, or (which is worſe) the Treachery of our Friends, to prevail againſt us; let not *this* itſelf deject us or ſhake the firm Repoſe of our Minds, but let us ſtill expreſs ourſelves in the ſame reſolved Manner that *Job* did under his ſevere Trials: *While I live, will I not re-*

Job xxvii. 5.

move

move mine Integrity from me; though he ſlay me, yet will I truſt in him. Let us, even at *ſuch* a Time, take up Words of holy Aſſurance, with *Habakkuk*, and ſay: *Although the Figtree ſhall not bloſſom, neither ſhall Fruit be in the Vines; the Labour of the Olive ſhall fail, and the Field ſhall yield no Meat; the Flocks ſhall be cut off from the Fold, and there ſhall be no Herd in the Stalls; yet will I rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my Salvation.* Hab. iii. 17, 18.

SERM. X.

Could we bring ourſelves once to this Divine Temper of Soul, could we work ourſelves up into this devout Confidence, all the Turns and Viciſſitudes of human Affairs, all the Strokes of ill Fortune, which we *feel* or *fear*, would ſit light and eaſy upon our Minds: In the midſt of Confuſion and Troubles, of Evils imminent, or already come; of real, or fancied Dangers; we might be even and ſerene; *poſſeſſing our Souls in Patience*, and the good Things of Life with *Pleaſure*; and enjoying the *preſent* Moment, without a Mixture of *Fears* and *Diſquiets*, ariſing from near or remote *Poſſibilities:*

SERM. X.

ſibilities: Saying, nay ſinging as the divine *Pſalmiſt* hath taught us, *God is our Hope and Strength, a very preſent Help in Time of Trouble! Therefore will we not fear, though the Earth be moved, and though the Hills be carried into the midſt of the Sea: Though the Waters thereof rage and ſwell, and though the Mountains ſhake at the Tempeſt of the ſame! God is our Hope and Strength, a very preſent Help in Time of Trouble.*

To whom, even to the *God and Father of our Life*, the wiſe Diſpenſer of Good and Evil, the Governor of Events, and Rock of our Confidence, together with his only begotten *Son*, and ever Bleſſed *Spirit*, be aſcribed *all Glory and Praiſe, now and for ever!*

The

The Wretchedneſs of a Wavering Mind.

A SERMON

Preached at the

ROLLS CHAPEL,

December 4, 1698.

GEN. xlix. 4.

Unſtable as Water, thou ſhalt not excel.

THESE are Part of the dying Patriarch *Jacob's* Words, when he bleſſed the Twelve, *leaning upon the Top of his Staff.* Of the Eldeſt of theſe [*Reuben*] the Character he gives is contained in the Words I have read to you; of which there are ſeveral very different Interpretations. I ſhall not trouble you with them, but take that, which they do moſt naturally and obviouſly bear. And according to that, *Jacob* does in theſe

SERM. XI.

Heb. xi. 21.

SERM. XI.

Words ſeem to repreſent *Reuben* to be of a fickle, uncertain, irreſolute Temper; not utterly void of all *Propenſions* to Goodneſs, but incapable of *acting up* to them; not without honeſt and virtuous Reſolutions, but unable firmly to keep and practiſe them. And this being his Caſe, he pronounces upon him, that he *ſhall not excel.* That is, that he ſhall never arrive to any Pitch and *Perfection* in Virtue, nor ever command a *thorough* Eſteem and Reſpect from *good* Men; that he ſhould never be able eminently to diſtinguiſh himſelf by the Exerciſe of thoſe good Qualities of Mind, which procure Honour and Happineſs to Men in *this* World, and in *another.*—*Unſtable as Water, thou ſhalt not excel.*

From which Words a natural Occaſion will be given me of diſcourſing to you of the *ill Condition* of that Man, who, like *Reuben* in the Text, being *unſtable as Water,* is diſtracted between *two* Courſes of Life, a *good* and a *bad* one. The *Unhappineſs* and *Wretchedneſs* of which State, after I have ſet out and

proved to you at large, I ſhall apply myſelf to perſuade the Man that is *thus bewildered*, to retrieve himſelf by ſerious Conſideration, as ſoon as he can, and to fix a *ſure* Principle of Virtue in his Mind, that may guide and govern him *throughout*, and make him *uniformly* wiſe and holy. SERM. XI.

Now the Condition of a Man who is divided between two *contrary* Ways of Life, between Virtue and Vice, Godlineſs and Irreligion, is certainly very wretched and deplorable. For he is in the meaneſt State of Mind that human Nature is capable of. He is perpetually reſtleſs and uneaſy; full of Anxiety and Torment. He loſes all the Advantages of *this* World; and moſt aſſuredly forfeits all Pretences to any in the *next*. I.

1. This doubtful, uncertain Way of Living and Thinking proceeds from a *mean* State of Mind, ſuch as is beneath the Dignity of human Nature.

Man was made to diſcern and embrace *Truth*; and, for this Reaſon, *is there a Spirit in him; and the Inſpiration* Job xxxii. 8.

SERM. XI. *of the Almighty has given him Under-ſtanding.* He has Faculties, whereby he may diſtinguiſh between true and falſe, right and wrong; and may fix to himſelf ſure Principles of Action. When he *does* this, approves what is beſt, and ſticks to what he approves, he does what he was deſigned to do, and anſwers the *End* of his Being. When he does *not*, but ſuffers himſelf to be ſwayed and bent different Ways by different Motives, and to float under Uncertainties, *then* he forfeits the great Prerogative, and the moſt diſtinguiſhing Advantage that belongs to the *reaſonable* Nature. The Scripture therefore alloweth not to the Irreſolute and the Inconſtant the Name of *Men:* They are ſaid to be *Children toſſed to and fro with every Wind of Doctrine.* They are in the Weakneſs and Nonage of their Reaſon, which is as yet not improved and ripened into its due Strength and Maturity.

Eph. iv. 14.

The *Perfection* of Man is to be *like* God; for *in his own Image created he him*; to be like God in *all* his Attributes, particularly

Gen. i. 27.

particularly in that glorious one of his *Immutability*; whereby *he is*, as the Scripture ſpeaks, *without Variableneſs, or Shadow of turning; the ſame Yeſterday, To-day, and for ever.* SERM. XI. James i. 17. Heb. xiii. 8.

Now this *Immutability* of God is twofold, relating either to his *Nature*, or his *Purpoſes*. The *Unchangeableneſs* of his *Nature* we have no Room to imitate: For he deſigned us for a *Changeable* State, made us Creatures that were to purify our Natures, and exalt them by Degrees; till by his laſt great and glorious *Change* he ſhould tranſlate us into an *Immortal* and *Unalterable* State, and make us eternally the *ſame* in our Natures, and eternally *happy* in the *Exerciſe* of them. But his *Moral Immutability*, the Steddineſs of his Counſels, Purpoſes, and Actions, we *may* in ſome Meaſure, and therefore *muſt* imitate, as far as Human Frailty will ſuffer us. We are like him in *this* Perfection, when we get to ourſelves, by Thought and Reflexion, a firm Perſuaſion of the Eternal Differences of Good and Evil, and of that inſeparable

SERM. XI. Dependance which Reward and Puniſhment have upon them; and when we govern our Lives under the Senſe of theſe Perſuaſions, *Evenly* and *Uniformly*. This is truly *Godlike!* the great Improvement, the Honour, and the Excellence of our Natures! And this Perfection he robs himſelf of, who *wavers* between different Principles and Practices; and is ſometimes *good* and ſometimes *bad*, as it happens. He puts not his *Faculties* to that *Uſe*, for which they were given him; employs not his *Reaſon* to thoſe *Purpoſes*, for which it was deſigned; the eſtabliſhing and ſtrengthening of his Mind in *moral* Principles; but lives us much at Random, and without Hold, as if *the Breath of the Almighty* were not in him.

Indeed, unleſs *Reaſon* gives us a Firmneſs and Conſtancy of acting, it is ſo far from being the Glory and the Privilege, that it is really the Reproach and Diſgrace of our Natures; and makes us lower than even *the Horſe and Mule that have no Underſtanding*. For *they*, without *that*, act always regularly and conſonantly to them-

Pſ. xxxii. 9.

themſelves, under the never erring Guidance of *Inſtinct*; a *blind*, but *ſure* Principle; whilſt *Man*, with all his boaſted Titles and Privileges, wanders about in Uncertainties, does and undoes, and contradicts himſelf throughout all the various Scenes of Thinking and Living. SERM. XI.

2. But the *Dignity* of our Nature, is a Conſideration capable of touching but *few*. Let us go on therefore to more plain and affecting Conſiderations. For ſuch an *unſettled* Temper of Mind as we have deſcribed, creates a great deal of *Trouble* and *Diſturbance* to the Man, who is ſo unhappy as to be Maſter of it.

And this follows plainly from what has been diſcourſed upon the former Head. For whatſoever is *natural*, becoming, and worthy of us, is attended always with *Eaſe* and *Delight* to the Doer; whereas that which thwarts our *firſt* End and Deſign, and is deſtructive of our *natural* Perfections, muſt needs be *Pain* and *Grief* to us. For the Truth of which in this particular Caſe we may appeal to the Feeling of all thoſe, who have ever once

SERM. XI. made the Experiment. How *uneaſy* is that Man always to himſelf, who acts backwards and forwards, and has no ſound Bottom to reſt upon. What Diſquiets does it create in his Mind, to ſee himſelf perpetually condemning himſelf, allowing himſelf in that Opinion or Practice *this* Hour, which he is ſure he ſhall diſallow and go againſt in the *next*. [And this, perhaps, is the only Part of his Temper that he ever can be ſure of.]

Certainly a Mind, thus at odds with itſelf, cannot but be very troubleſome to the Man that has it, unleſs, together with the Power of keeping his Reſolutions, he has loſt alſo that of reflecting afterwards on the Breach of them. For whenever he looks back upon his Actions, *Guilt* and *Folly* will appear written, as it were, upon the Front of them: He muſt needs pronounce himſelf Light and Inconſiſtent, Inſincere, and Void of that true Fear of God, which dwells only with Simplicity and a ſingle Heart. In fine; ſo many diſagreeable and mortifying Thoughts will offer themſelves to him, as

cannot

cannot but leave a Wound behind them. And a *Spirit thus wounded* (with *Guilt* and *Folly* too) *who can bear?* In Truth, as to *Eaſe* of Mind, it belongs oftentimes to the *completely* wicked, more than to thoſe who are by *halves* ſo. For the *firſt* may have hardened and ſtupified his Conſcience ſo far, till it lets him alone, and gives him no further Notice of the Dangerouſneſs of the State he is in. But he who Sins and Repents, and then ſins again in an endleſs Circle, is ſure to hear of his own Follies, and be ſenſible of his own Miſeries. His *good* Fits are like the ſhort *Intervals* of Madneſs, which ſerve only to let the *Madman* into a Knowledge of his own Diſeaſe; whereas it would be much more to his Satisfaction and Content, if he were Mad *always*.

SERM. XI.

Good God! When a Man finds himſelf breaking through all the ſtrongeſt Bonds that ſhould hold him; through his moſt deliberate Reſolutions, made in Time of great Danger and Adverſity, or upon his ſolemn Approach to the Table of the Lord, but forgotten again in the

Preſence

SERM. XI. Preſence of any new Temptation, what Horrors muſt the Senſe of this create in him? What Hatred and Contempt of himſelf? What Deſpair almoſt of ever arriving at that Strength and Firmneſs of Mind, which is requiſite to carry him evenly on through the Paths of Virtue? Surely he *is like the troubled Sea, that cannot reſt, whoſe Waters caſt up Mire and Dirt. There is no Peace, ſaith my God, to* ſuch a *wicked* one as this.

Iſa. lvii. 20, 21.

But *further*, ſuch a Temper, ſo diſtracted between contrary Inclinations and Practices, is in the

3d Place, miſchievous to a Man in Point of *Intereſt*, as well as *Eaſe*. For it renders him unfit for all the Affairs and Buſineſs of Life; incapable of forming advantageous Deſigns with Confidence, or of proſecuting them with Effect. *A double minded Man* (ſaith St. *James*) *is unſtable in all his Ways.* He that is ſo in Point of *Religion* (the greateſt and moſt important Concern of Life, the one Thing neceſſary) will probably be ſo in *every* Thing beſide; and then what kind of Undertaking

* James i. 8.

taking is ſuch an one qualified for? To what Calling can he betake himſelf with any Probability of Succeſs, who wants the very firſt Elements of Thriving, Induſtry, Conſtancy, and Perſeverance? Alas! the Doubts and Miſgivings of his Heart concerning his own internal State are ſuch, as take away from him the Taſte of all outward Comforts at preſent, and hinder him from an effectual Purſuit of them. It muſt be a *Mind eaſy and at reſt*, that can apply itſelf thoroughly towards making thoſe Advantages of the Things of this Life, which are innocent and lawful. And *ſuch* an one is not *his*, whoſe *Ways* (as the Wiſe Man ſpeaks) *are double before the Lord.* *Beſides*, this Unequalneſs in acting, theſe Heats and theſe Colds in Religion, when once they appear (and how can they chuſe but appear ſome time or other?) will draw upon a Man the Suſpicion of Hypocriſy and Diſſimulation. He, who in the Eye of the World is ſometimes *good*, and ſometimes *bad*, as it happens, will be ſure to have the Meaſure of himſelf SERM. XI.

SERM. XI. ſelf taken from the *worſt* Side of him; and the other Parts of his Character eſteemed only as pure Artifice and Feigning. His Credit will be blaſted, and his good Name taken away; that Engine, by which he is to profit himſelf and others, and to do all the Good he is like to do in the World. Intimacies and Friendſhips are the great Comforts and Supports of Life, and of theſe ſuch a Man will be always thought incapable. What Ground can his *Levity* give any one to build their *Confidence* upon? What Encouragement is there to venture an *Acquaintance* with the Raſh and *Unſtable*? What Reaſon to expect a *mutual* Conſent and Agreement of Thoughts and Affections, from a Mind ſo little *at Unity in itſelf*?

4. But theſe are *ſlight* Inconveniences, in Compariſon of what follows; that ſuch a *wavering* uncertain Temper of Mind is utterly inconſiſtent with the Terms of *Salvation*, and the Hopes of eternal Happineſs. For 'tis not an Holineſs taken up by *Fits* and *Starts*, that can carry a Man

Man to Heaven. It muſt be a conſtant regular Principle, influencing us *throughout*, that muſt do that. *If ye continue in my Word* (ſays our Saviour) *then are ye my Diſciples indeed.* An *uninterrupted* Courſe of Virtue and Goodneſs; and nothing leſs, can juſtify us before God, and intitle us to our Reward. And the Reaſon is, becauſe nothing *leſs* can prove our *Sincerity* to God, which is the great and fundamental Rule, by which we are to be tried. And a Vein of this muſt run through all our Thoughts and Actions, to make them acceptable before God. *My Son, give me thy Heart*, ſays God; that is, come to me with a *ſincere* and *unfeigned* Deſign of ſerving me; ſurrender up to me *all* thy Inclinations and Affections without Reſerve; and give me Poſſeſſion of thy Soul, without any Rival or Competitor. Which how can *he* be ſaid to do, that admits *contrary* Intereſts perpetually to ſtruggle within him, and in his heartieſt *Repentances* is not without ſome Proſpect of *Sinning* again? Holy *David*, therefore, makes *Inſincerity* the

SERM. XI.

John viii. 31.

Character

SERM. XI. Character and Mark of theſe kind of Men: *Their Heart was not right with God*, ſays he, *neither were they ſtedfaſt in his Covenant.* The one follows upon the other; if ſo be that they are not *ſtedfaſt*, neither can their Hearts be *right with God.*

Pſ. lxxviii. 37.

Let not a Man, therefore, flatter himſelf that things are well with him, becauſe he is not abſolutely *given over to work Wickedneſs*, but though he ſometimes ſeems to be *dead in Trepaſſes and Sins*, yet he ſoon *riſes* again by Repentance; for aſſuredly this (which is at the Bottom nothing but an Art of getting to Heaven, and yet enjoying his Luſts all the while) will not ſerve his Turn. There is no Promiſe in Scripture that belongs to the *unſtable* and *wavering* Man; the Terms of the Covenant are *univerſal Purity*; or at *leaſt univerſal Sincerity*: And *under* theſe, can no Man be ſaved. And as the State of a Man is thus, with Reſpect to another World, very dangerous and bad *already*, ſo is it likely to grow worſe and worſe *ſtill* without Remedy.

Eph. ii. 1.

For

For every *new* Return to Sin, every ſin- SERM. gle Deſertion of Virtue, does naturally XI. unqualify a Man more and more for a ſound Repentance, and weakens all the Motives that lead to it. Sin does by this Means grow familiar to us, and loſes its Frightfulneſs. By our ſuffering its continual Approaches, it begins to appear to us in a more harmleſs Shape: We find fewer Horrors about us at the Thought of it, fewer Deſires of avoiding it.

Beſides, by theſe *Viciſſitudes* of ſinning and relapſing, our Reſolution at laſt is quite broken; and we ſit down every Time with leſs Hopes of the Mercy and Forgiveneſs of God, and of his Grace and Aſſiſtance.

Much more might be ſaid, to ſet out the great *Danger* of ſuch a State, and the Inconſiſtency of it with the Terms of Salvation, if this were not too plain a Point to need any further Proof; and therefore I chuſe rather in what remains, to go on, as I propoſed, from theſe ſeveral Conſiderations,

Secondly,

SERM. XI.

Secondly, To perſuade the Man that is thus *bewildered*, to retrieve himſelf by ſerious Conſideration, as ſoon as is poſſible; and to fix a ſure Principle of *Virtue* in his Mind, that may guide and govern him *throughout*, and make him *uniformly* wiſe and holy.

For which Purpoſe I ſhall take leave to recommend two or three *plain*, but *uſeful* Conſiderations.

1. And *firſt*, he that ſets about this Work, muſt be ſure that his *Belief* is right and ſound at the Bottom. For 'tis generally the Uncertainty and Waveringneſs of this, that produces all that Unevenneſs and Diſorder in the Life and Practice of Mankind. A ſudden Heat of Devotion, or the Fear of what will become of a Man in the other World, will carry him ſometimes into mighty Reſolutions of quitting Sin, and living well for the future. But theſe wear off quickly and come to nothing; becauſe they aroſe only from preſent Paſſion, and were not built on any good Foundation,

Foundation, on any ſtrong and full Conviction of the Mind. They are *the Seed which fell upon ſtony Places, where they had not much Earth; and forthwith they ſprang up, becauſe they had no Deepneſs of Earth: But when the Sun was up* (when an *hot* Temptation preſented itſelf afreſh) *they were ſcorched; and becauſe they had no Root, they withered away.* Let him therefore, who would purſue, this Cure to Purpoſe, *look to himſelf, leſt there be in him an evil Heart of Unbelief.* Let him enquire diligently of himſelf, whereon it is that his *Faith* ſtands; how he comes to be perſuaded of the Truth of *Natural* Principles, and of thoſe of *Revealed Religion.* And let him (if he has it not already) procure to himſelf ſuch an Evidence of theſe Things, as is not to be ſhaken. For when this Principle is once well fixed in his Heart, Virtue will go out from it into his Life and Actions; and it will work Wonders towards making him all Harmonious, and of a Piece. When he has gone *thus* far, let him,

SERM. XI.

Matt. xiii. 5, 6.

Heb. iii. 12.

SERM. XI.

2. In the next Place, conſider well what that *particular Weight* was, that in the Days of his *Irreſolution* ſtill hung upon him, and clogged all his virtuous Endeavours. What it was, that, when his Soul had made ſome Effort towards Goodneſs, overbalanced it ſtill, and ſwayed it ſecretly again towards Nature's Side: For that too is very often the Caſe. There is ſome particular Sin of our Conſtitution, ſome great and ruling Infirmity, that damps all our good Motions, and ſpoils all our beſt Reſolutions; and will continue to do ſo, till by a direct Oppoſition of ourſelves to it, we have conquered and removed it. When we have cut off *this Right Hand*, plucked out *this Right Eye*, ſacrificed the darling Luſt of our Heart, we may then hope, that the greateſt Part of the Difficulty is over, and that no *leſs powerful* Temptation will be able to draw us aſide. But till *this* be done, in vain are all our *other* Attempts and Deſigns. While *the great Offence* has yet any Hold upon us, nothing will be done to Purpoſe; but he that

that *has* been divided in his Opinion, and wavering in his Practice, will be divided and wavering *ſtill.* SERM. XI.

3. When he has *thus* ſettled his *Faith* upon good Grounds, and armed himſelf well againſt *that Sin which does ſo eaſily beſet him,* he muſt take care (in the next Place) not to ſuffer himſelf to come within Reach of any Thing that may any ways *unfaſten* his Reſolutions, whilſt they are yet young and tender. He muſt admit of no Debate within him about a *Principle,* but throw off all ſuch Thoughts, as Enemies to the Peace of his Mind. He muſt liſten to no *ſceptical* Diſcourſe; no looſe Reaſonings of carnal Men, ſuch as pervert the Truth. For theſe are the chief Engines of *Satan* to draw him back again into his former Unſettledneſs; and his good Purpoſes may happen to be blaſted in the Bud, if they are ventured too ſoon amongſt them. No! No! but let him root and ground himſelf in the *Faith* firſt by an anſwerable Life and Converſation; ſo ſhall it happen, that as his good *Practice* took Heb. xii. 1.

SERM. XI. riſe at *firſt* from his good *Opinions*, ſo ſhall his *Opinions* be ſtrengthened *afterwards* by his *Practice*; till *both* being *confirmed* in him, ſhall enable him to *ſtand in the evil Day*, and not to be afraid of whatever it is that would ſhake his *Stedfaſtneſs*.

Eph. vi. 13.

4. If to theſe *Endeavours* he (laſtly) joins fervent and unwearied *Prayer* to Almighty God, for the Aids and Supports of his *Grace*, he ſhall aſſuredly from thence be made *perfect* at laſt, be *ſtabliſhed, ſtrengthened, ſettled*. He ſhall have a new Heart created in him, that ſhall enable him to *be ſtedfaſt, immoveable, always abounding in the Work of the Lord*.

1 Cor. xv. 58.

Of

Of Living Peacebly:

A

Farewel SERMON

Preached at

St. *BRIDE'S*,

December 11, 1698.

ROM. xii. 18.

If it be poſſible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all Men.

SERM. XII.

THERE are many excellent Precepts and Rules of Duty laid together by the *Apoſtle* toward the End of this Chapter; but none of greater Moment to be earneſtly inculcated upon

SERM. XII. *Chriſtians*, and duly obſerved, than this which I have pitched upon for the Subject of my following Diſcourſe. And I have the rather choſen it, at this particular Time, becauſe it is the laſt Opportunity I ſhall have of beſpeaking you under that *Character*, which I have hitherto borne towards you. And it being likely therefore that the Conteſt now on foot, may end in the ſame little Animoſities and Miſunderſtandings, which are uſual on ſuch Occaſions; I thought I could not do better, than to diſcourſe to you upon a Subject that might be of ſome Uſe to temper and allay them; and to diſpoſe you towards ſuch a peaceable State of Mind, as becomes thoſe, who are about to chuſe a Miniſter of the *Goſpel of Peace*.

I ſhall diſcourſe *firſt* to you of the Argument at *large*, and then apply it to the *particular* Occaſion for which I have choſen it. What I have to ſay on theſe Words, muſt naturally fall under theſe four Heads following:

Firſt,

First, Here is a *Command* enjoined; to *live peaceably*. SERM. XII.

Secondly, The utmoſt *Limits* and *Extent* of that Command are ſet down; we muſt live peaceably *with all Men*. II.

Thirdly, The great *Difficulty* of ſo doing, is allowed and expreſſed: *If it be poſſible*, ſays St. *Paul*, and *as much as in you lies*; intimating, that in reſpect of ſome *Tempers*, and in ſome *Circumſtances*, it is ſcarce poſſible, though we do all that in us lies, to effect it. To which I ſhall add in the III.

Fourth and *laſt* Place, ſome familiar *Helps* and *Directions*, that may be of Uſe to aſſiſt us towards performing it. IV.

As to the *First* of theſe, the *Precept* here given of *living peaceably*, I need not uſe many Words to tell you what it is; it is eaſily and univerſally I.

SERM. XII.

underſtood: Would to God, it were but as univerſally practiſed! And then ſuch Exhortations as theſe would be needleſs! But though an Account of the *Duty* may not be requiſite, to inform even the meaneſt and moſt ignorant *Chriſtian*, yet it may be of uſe to bring to his Mind what he already knows, and to awaken in him ſenſible and lively Impreſſions of it: And to that End, I ſhall in a very brief, and plain Manner deſcribe it.

To *live peaceably*, is ſo to demean ourſelves in all the Offices and Stations of Life, as to promote a friendly Underſtanding and Correſpondence among thoſe we converſe with; ſo as to prevent, as much as we can, all *outward* Contention and Strife, may, all *inward* Miſtakes and Jealouſies from ariſing, and to quench and allay them as ſoon as we can, whenever they are riſen; ſo, as to diſagree *openly* with no Man in Things of an *indifferent* Nature, and of no Moment; and, where the Point is of *Importance* enough to deſerve to be

be inſiſted on, there to do it, with ſo much Candor, and Modeſty, and Sweetneſs, as not to offend even thoſe we do not agree with. In a Word, it is ſo to conduct our Actions, Diſcourſes, and Dealings, as to make ourſelves, and others as *eaſy* as is poſſible. Various are the Inſtances of this Duty; ſome influencing our Behaviour with relation to the *Public*, ſome towards *Private* Men; ſome regarding *Opinions*, and ſome regulating our *Practice*; ſome taking Place in Matters of *Civil* Life, and ſome in the Concerns of *Religion*.

SERM. XII.

They *live peaceably* with reſpect to the *Public*, who pay a due Regard to the *Laws* of their Country, and expreſs a due Reverence towards their *Superiors*; honouring them ſincerely, obeying them ſubmiſſively; nor raſhly cenſuring their Actions, but putting the beſt and moſt candid Conſtruction upon them; not being over buſy in Matters that are too high for them, and do not concern them.

They

SERM. XII.

They *live peaceably* in *Religious* Matters, who, on the *one* Side, are contented to enjoy their own Opinions, without arraigning their Superiors in Church and State for being otherwiſe minded; and without diſturbing the public Peace, in order to propagate their Tenets, and make Proſelytes; and who, on the *other* Side, do not by unjuſtifiable Methods of Severity force Men into the Profeſſion of what they diſbelieve; whoſe Zeal for their Faith never makes them forget their Temper, nor outrun the Bounds of Chriſtian Goodneſs and Prudence; who make great Allowances for the Weakneſs of Men's Reaſon and the Strength of their Prejudices, and condemn not all as inſincere, who are not ſo enlightened as they are; but leave them to ſtand or fall to their own Maſter; praying for them in the mean time, that they may come to the Knowledge of the Truth, and endeavouring by all gentle perſuaſive Methods to reclaim them.

Finally,

Finally, They *live peaceably* in Matters of *common* Life and *daily* Practice, who take care to make their Carriage inoffenſive, obliging; who are not ready to entertain ill Reports of Men, much leſs to diſperſe them; who whiſper about nothing to ſet Friends and Neighbours at Variance; who mind their own Buſineſs, without intermeddling much in the Concerns of others; who can take a *ſlight* Affront or Injury in Converſation without reſenting it, and even a *great* one without returning it. SERM. XII.

But I forbear to give any further Deſcription of ſo known a Duty; and go on to conſider in the

Second Place, the *Extent* of it: it muſt be practiſed towards *all Men*: Not only towards thoſe who are in *good* Terms with us, but toward thoſe who are *not*; not only to the Good-natured and Candid, but even to the Captious and the Froward. For, as our Saviour argues in a like Caſe, if II.

you

SERM. XII.

you live peaceably with *them only*, who live peaceably with *you*, *what Thank have you! Do not even Sinners the same?* The Worſt, and worſt Natured Men will go thus far: For there is no Temptation to break Peace with thoſe who live inoffenſively with us, no room for Contention with the Mild and Complying; the Trial of our Temper is, when Shocking Accidents happen to us, when ill Words are given us; when we are touched in Point of Intereſt and Honour; or in any other reſpect drawn into a Diſpute, and forced to engage: Then, to bear Oppoſition meekly, to ward off the Anger of our Adverſaries by a diſcreet and dexterous Addreſs; to keep ourſelves free from the Contagion of that Paſſion and that Reſentment which reigns in them, or free at leaſt from the outward and viſible Signs of it, this is no *vulgar* Attainment, but a very great Pitch of Chriſtian *Perfection*. And the *Apoſtle* therefore, at the very Time he is giving the *Pre-*

Matt. v. 46.

cept,

cept, acknowledges the great *Difficulty* that there is ſometimes in *obeying* it: *If it be poſſible*, ſays he, and *as much as in you lies*; intimating, as I ſaid, that in reſpect of *ſome Natures*, and in *ſome Circumſtances*, it is *ſcarce* poſſible, tho' we do whatever in us lies, to come up to it. SERM. XII.

III. And this is the *Third* Thing I undertook to explain.

To *live peaceably with all Men*, in the ſtricteſt Senſe of the Words, is a Thing abſolutely impoſſible, and out of our Reach; for it depends upon what we are not Maſters of, the Diſpoſitions and Paſſions of other Men. Let us take what Care we can to prevent miſtakes, they will ſometimes ariſe; let us with never ſo much Caution avoid *doing* Injuries, we cannot always avoid *receiving* them; ſome churliſh and ſavage Natures there are, that delight in Outrages, and are moved with no Condeſcenſions, no Compliances: *ſuch Sons of Belial* (as was ſaid 1 Sam. xxv. 17.

SERM. XII. ſaid of *Nabal*) *that a Man cannot ſpeak to them.* Where *violent* Encroachments are made upon our *Fortune* or *good Name*, we not only *may*, but *muſt* vindicate ourſelves from them, though Breach of Peace, and an open Rupture with any Man attend our doing it. *Slight* Affronts, and *ſmall* Injuſtices we may put up with; but where we are wounded to the *Quick*, either in our Eſtate, or Reputation, we are not at *Liberty* to be ſilent: To be upon our Defence in ſuch Caſes, is a Debt we owe to ourſelves, our Poſterity, our Relations, and Friends, who have all an Intereſt in us.

When the Cauſe of true Religion ſuffers from the Tongues or Pens of Libertines and Unbelievers; when any open Attempts are by ill Men made on the Conſtitution of that Church or State, whereof we are Members; when an abſent Friend is traduced by lying Lips; or the Name of any ſincerely good and virtuous Man is vilified; it is our Duty in ſuch Caſes

to

to ſtand up, and rebuke this Spirit of Treachery, Malice, or Prophaneneſs. The Honour of God, or the Intereſts of Virtue would, at ſuch a Time, be blemiſhed by our Silence and Forbearance: And therefore the Rule of our Saviour here takes Place; *he that is not with us, is againſt us.* He that doth not openly and heartily eſpouſe the Cauſe of *Truth*, will be reckoned to have been on the other Side. And then *Peace* with *Men* can never be eligible, when it implies *Enmity* with *God.* SERM. XII.

However, in all theſe Caſes, where we lay aſide *Peace* for a more valuable End, we are bound to have an Eye to it, even while we ſeem to overlook it; and muſt ſo break with Men on ſuch Occaſions, as to leave Room, and to prepare the Way for a Cloſure. *War* itſelf has its Rules and Reſtraints, within which its ſavage Cruelties are bounded: Much more muſt the Meaſures of our Reſentment, in ſuch Breaches as theſe, be tempered with

SERM. XII.

with great Humanity and great Prudence. We muſt recover our Right, and wipe off Aſperſions, without Rancour or Revenge; we muſt contend for the Truth of the Goſpel itſelf, ſo as not to forget the plain Precepts of it; and for the Glory of God, with ſuch a well regulated Zeal, as does not trample upon any of his Commands: That is, the Warmth of our Concern for the beſt Doctrines, Perſons, or Things, muſt never ſo far tranſport us, as to make us ſay any Thing of any Man, but what our Cauſe and his Character will juſtify; nor endeavour to inſpire People with worſe Opinions concerning him, than we in our Conſciences believe he deſerves. And to preſerve ourſelves thus far upon our Guard, when we are engaged, is a much harder Taſk than not to engage at all; and will require our calling in to our Aid all the pious Helps and Expedients, with which Reaſon and Religion will furniſh

niſh us; and which therefore I ſhall now, in the *Fourth* and *laſt* Place, point out to you. SERM. XII. IV.

Many of this Kind there are; but the Time I have already ſpent, and the Application I am further to make of the Whole, will not ſuffer me to mention *all*, or to dwell, as much as I ought, even on *thoſe* that I do mention.

1. The Riſe of moſt of our Diſquiets and Diſcords is, from the tumultuous and diſorderly Motions of our *Paſſions*; and theſe therefore muſt in the *firſt* Place be well regulated, eſpecially that fierce and boiſterous Paſſion of *Anger*, which diſcovers itſelf the earlieſt, and is tamed the lateſt of any; and is, of all others, the greateſt Enemy of our Repoſe. *This* therefore, and the *reſt* muſt be brought under the Diſcipline and Government of *Reaſon*, if we ever hope to be eaſy to ourſelves or other Men; and in-

SERM. XII.

deed, unleſs we are firſt eaſy to ourſelves, it is impoſſible we ſhould ever be ſo to others. We may as well expect perpetual Sun-ſhine in Chimates ſubject to Storms and Hurricanes, as that there ſhould be a *laſting* Peace in that Breaſt, where the *Paſſions* are allowed to reign.

2. The next plain Help towards *living peaceably* is, if we moderate our Deſires, and ſhorten our Deſigns, with Regard to the good Things of Life, contenting ourſelves with ſuch a Share of them, as anſwers all the good Ends of living, and not eagerly graſping after more, than would be of real Uſe to us, if we had it: The Wants and Conveniences of *Nature* are known, and certain, and ſoon ſupplied; but *imaginary* Wants are infinite and endleſs; and he that has ſet his Heart upon them, will find it very difficult ever to recall it. He is got beyond Reaſon in his Deſire, and will probably ſtick at no unreaſonable Method of obtaining it. And the natural Iſſue

of

of this muſt be perpetual Feuds and Bickerings, Contentions, and Struggles; for *our* Deſires will meet thoſe of *other* Men, as eager every whit as ours, and as impatient of being reſiſted. *From whence come War and Fightings?* (ſays St. *James.*) *Come they not hence, even of your Luſts?* that is, from your covetous Deſires; for ſo it follows: *Ye luſt, and have not; ye kill, and deſire to have, and cannot obtain.* James iv. 1, 2.

SERM. XII.

3. A third Rule, in this Caſe, is, to have a watchful Eye upon ourſelves, in our firſt *Entrance* upon any Debate or Conteſt; and at that Time to be ſure to keep the Reins cloſely in our Hands, *when* there is the moſt Danger in giving a looſe to them; and they are the moſt eaſily manageable. For let us but indulge ourſelves a little in the firſt Motions of Warmth and Reſentment, and by inſenſible Steps and Degrees we may be wrought up at laſt into all the Heighth of Madneſs and Folly. *The beginning of Strife* (ſaith Prov. xvii. 14.

SERM. XII. (ſaith the Wiſe Man) *is as when one letteth out Water.* When the Bank is once broken down, we do not know how far it may flow, or how deep a Space it may fill.

To this we may add,

4thly, A particular Vigilance over ourſelves, with regard to the Intemperance of the *Tongue*, that *Member which ſetteth on Fire the Courſe of Nature, and is itſelf ſet on Fire of Hell.* We muſt reſtrain it in every Reſpect, but eſpecially in relation to that natural Proneneſs it has towards publiſhing the Faults of others; which ought never to be done, but with the utmoſt Caution and Tenderneſs. We can never ſtrictly juſtify ourſelves in ſpeaking Evil of any Man, though that Evil ſhould be true, but when either the Seal of Friendſhip binds up the Diſcourſe, or the Rules of Charity and Juſtice require us ſo to do. The Son of *Sirach* ſeems to carry this Matter very far: *Whether it be to Friend or Foe* (ſays he) *talk not of other Men's*

James iii. 6.

Eccluſ xix. 8.

Men's Lives, and, if thou canſt without Offence, reveal them not; which ſeems to bar us from ſpreading an ill Report of any Man, but when we are under an abſolute *Neceſſity* of doing it. He that governs himſelf conſtantly by *this* Rule, takes one of the ſureſt and moſt promiſing *Steps* towards *living peaceably with all Men*: Eſpecially if, SERM. XII.

5thly, He keeps himſelf always from embarking in Parties and Factions, and falling in with Vehemence into all the Intereſts and Deſigns of them. This will neceſſarily in Time imbitter his Spirit, and ſour his Humour, make him like and diſlike Men implicitly, and lead him into many Reſentments, which he has nothing do with.

Again, 6thly, Let a Man that deſires to paſs through this World inoffenſively, reſolve to be very diligent in his particular *Profeſſion* and *Calling*; and, if he has none, to make one to himſelf, by ſome proper and ſuitable

SERM. XII.

Employment. He that is employed, has no Leiſure to move in the little Diſputes and Quarrels which trouble the Peace of the World, and which are chiefly kept up and bandied to and fro by thoſe who have nothing elſe to do: The Apoſtle therefore (we may obſerve) in his Exhortation joins *ſtudying to be quiet*, with the *doing our own Buſineſs*, as if the one was a natural and inſeparable Attendant on the other.

1 Theſſ. iv. 11.

Above all, let him add, in the *laſt* Place, fervent and unwearied *Prayer* to the bleſſed *Author of Peace, and Lover of Concord*, that he would pleaſe to vouchſafe him the ineſtimable Benefits of it, and endue him with the Qualities that promote it, by the powerful Operation of that *Spirit*, whoſe *Fruits*, *Love*, *Joy*, and *Peace*, are peculiarly ſaid to be; who inhabiteth only with thoſe, who do, in ſome Meaſure, partake of them, and who to thoſe, with whom he inhabits, imparteth them yet more and more abundantly.

Thus

Thus have I largely explained to you the Duty of *living peaceably*, and ſhewn you ſome of the moſt effectual Methods of performing it. Would to God all that hear me this Day would reſolve to practiſe this plain, but uſeful Leſſon, as fully as I have handled it, and give a remarkable Inſtance of their Compliance with the Direction of the Text, in the *Choice* that is now coming before you; wherein, I fear, there will be but too much Occaſion given of trying how far theſe Conſiderations have had their due Weight with you, and made a deep and becoming Impreſſion upon you. SERM. XII.

Seven Years I have from this Place admoniſhed, exhorted, beſought you: What Succeſs theſe Labours of mine have had, He knows beſt, for whoſe Glory they were deſigned. It will be one ſure and comfortable Sign to me that they have had *ſome*, if it ſhall appear, that the Words I have ſpoken

SERM. XII.

to you To-day, are not in vain; if they ſhall prevail with you in any meaſure, to avoid thoſe Rocks, which are uſually ſplit upon in Elections, where Multitudes of different Inclinations, Capacities, and Judgments are intereſted. To which End, let me intreat you, that, ſince in theſe Caſes Unanimity and an entire Agreement of Hearts and Voices is not to be expected, you would at leaſt take Care to diſagree, in as decent, and friendly, and Chriſtian a Manner as is poſſible.

Let not your Zeal for any *one* Man's Character ever draw you to load, and depreciate, and vilify *another!* Take not up ſlight Reports to Men's Diſadvantage, ſpread them not, encourage them not, liſten not with Greedineſs to them.

Let it be enough, that the unſucceſsful *loſe* what they ſeek after, an Opportunity of exerciſing among you that Talent in divine Inſtructions where-

with

with God has enabled them. Let them not *loſe* alſo, as far as in any of you lies, their *good Name*, that great Engine of doing good, by which their Labours muſt be made effectual to other Perſons, in other Places; and which as far as any of you ſhall *endeavour* to deprive them of, ſo far will you endeavour to obſtruct the Influence of their Doctrine, and to make their Character uſeleſs. SERM. XII.

Remember, I beſeech you, that your holy Contention is, about *a Miniſter of the Goſpel of Chriſt*; carry it not on by a Violation of any Rules of the Goſpel: Thoſe Rules, for the Breach of which, if he be a good Man (as I queſtion not he will be) he will not thank you, nay will be obliged by his very Poſt to reprove you afterwards.

I ſpeak not this to accuſe any of you, as if any of theſe Methods had been already practiſed; but knowing how the *Paſſions* of Men, not under the ſtrong Checks and Reſtraints of *Grace*,

SERM. XII.

Grace, are apt to work on theſe Occaſions, as becomes me, I warn you.

Set an Example to the reſt of the Pariſhes of this ample City, in the Management of ſuch Elections as theſe, reform the Diſorders that (God knows) too often attend them. Manifeſt to the World the *Reaſonableneſs* of your having an Intereſt in chuſing your Preachers, by the fit and laudable *Manner* in which you make uſe of it. Be not too ſtiff and peremptory in your Opinions: Let thoſe who are (or ſhould be) conſcious of their not having all the Advantages requiſite towards determining their Choice in theſe Things, defer ſomewhat to the Judgment of ſuch as are, perhaps, ſomewhat better qualified for it: They muſt judge for themſelves indeed, their Souls are concerned; but let them judge with Humility and Modeſty.

Should ſome little Heats ariſe, while the Diſpute laſts, when it is over, I am confident they will vaniſh; and all of you will join in paying that Perſon you ſhall

ſhall pitch upon, the Eſteem due to his Function, and to his Station here; and which, I take this Opportunity of telling the World, I have truly received from you. SERM. XII.

However, though I have no Reaſon in any reſpect to complain of my Entertainment among you, yet nothing would pleaſe me better than to hear that your Reſpect and Love was, in every Inſtance, increaſed towards him that is to ſucceed me; becauſe nothing can be a better Evidence of your *Sincerity* in Religion, and of your *Growth* in it, that when you grow alſo in your ſincere *Regards* to thoſe, who, in a particular manner, belong both to *that* and *you*. And it is an infallible Sign, that the Truths of the Goſpel have not made that Impreſſion upon a Man's Heart and Conſcience which they ought to do, when the Preachers of the Goſpel have not had that Share in his Eſteem, which belongs to the Uſefulneſs and Dignity of their ſacred Employment.

And

SERM. XII. And this I take to be ſo univerſal a Rule, as to admit of no Exception; at leaſt, I am ſure, I never met with any. And it is therefore my Hope, I ſay, that you will always ſhew yourſelves to be a religious People, and under the Influence of good Principles, by your Behaviour towards thoſe whoſe Buſineſs it is to *watch over you for good*; which will be one Way, I am ſure, of ſecuring to yourſelves a Succeſſion of able and worthy Men, as may adorn this Place, equally by their Lives and Doctrines; and be a laſting Honour and Advantage to thoſe who chuſe them.

As for *myſelf*, with how great Imperfection I have performed my Duty here, and how far ſhort I have fallen of the important Truſt committed to me, of inſtructing and guiding you in the Ways of Virtue, no Body can be more ſenſible of than I am. However, thus much I take leave to ſay, that in *Simplicity and godly Sincerity* I have preached the *Goſpel of Chriſt* among

you: directing my Diſcourſes always against thoſe vicious *Principles* and *Practices*, which to me ſeemed moſt to prevail; and ſparing nothing I obſerved to be amiſs in you, out of Regard to Men's *Perſons or Opinions*, or to any worldly Conſideration whatever. SERM. XII.

The Infidelity of the Age has forced me to dwell often on the great Articles and Myſteries of our Faith, and to explain them largely: But I call God to witneſs, that I never propoſed any Explication of theſe Points, never recommended any Thing of this Kind to *your* Belief, but what I firmly, and from the Bottom of my Heart *believed myſelf*. The *Faith* I have delivered to you, the *Faith* of the Church of *England*, into which we were *all* baptized, is, I am intirely ſatisfied, the ſame that *was once delivered to the Saints*: I hope none of you will be ever invited, by the ſpecious Arts and Inſinuations of *Hereſy*, to depart from it. I am ſure the Profeſſion of it in all its Branches and Members, is what

SERM. XII.

what, by the Grace of God, *I intend to live and die in.*

The *Church* you are of, is, without doubt, the pureſt and ſoundeſt, the moſt reaſonable and moderate Church upon Earth; the neareſt to the primitive Pattern of any, and the moſt ſerviceable to our Improvement in Virtue and Godlineſs: Reverence her, I beſeech you, in proportion to her Worth; quit not her Communion for any Boaſts to more *pure* and *ſpiritual* Worſhip; not for the Amuſements of a more *glorious* and *ſplendid* one; for the Pretences of thoſe Men who make *Reaſon* their *God*, without taking in *Revelation* for their *Guide*; or for the extravagant Follies and Freaks of *Enthuſiaſm.*

As a Sign of your unfeigned Reſpect for her Conſtitution, reſort often to her Service, and let your outward Behaviour there ſpeak your inward Devotion; frequent her Sacraments; liſten to her Inſtructions from the Pulpit; breed up your Children in the Knowledge

ledge of her Articles of Religion; ſeaſon them early with a due Value for her Doctrine and Diſcipline; and ſatisfy yourſelves, that this is one of the beſt Legacies you can leave them. SERM. XII.

This is what I have always inculcated to you, and, had the Providence of God continued me longer among you, ſhould have gone on to inculcate ſtill. I can only hereafter wiſh it, and pray for it, which I ſhall not fail to perform.

Indeed my particular Employment here now ceaſes, but my *Relation* to you, I truſt, never ſhall; I ſhall always cheriſh the *Memory* of it, and reflect gratefully upon it, reckoning myſelf *yours* in ſome meaſure, even after my miniſterial Office here is at an End, and being ready to ſerve any, even the meaneſt of you, in all the Chriſtian Duties and Services of which I am capable.

And now, Brethren I commend you to God, and to the Word of his Grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an Inheritance Acts xx. 32.

SERM. XII.

Inheritance among them that are ſanctifica
And may *the God of Peace* (that Peace
to the Practice of which I have nov
been exhorting and perſuading you) ma
Heb. xiii. 20. *the God of Peace, who brought again fro*
the Dead our Lord Jeſus, *that great Shep*
herd of the Sheep, through the Blood of th
everlaſting Covenant, make you perfect i
every good Work to do his Will; workin
in you that which is well pleaſing in h
Sight, through Jeſus Chriſt, *to whom b*
Glory for ever and ever. Amen.

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